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The Judge's Cave

A romance of the Regicides.

Margaret Sidney

Specialer – Julen

"Stout hearts were quaking
it would take but little, they
well knew in this troubled
time, for the royal wrath to
descend upon their Colony.
And they had bartered the
Judges!" page 127.

This is the quotation, which
my mother, Mrs. Daniel Lothrop
"Margaret Sidney", chose when
she autographed this book.

Margaret M. Lothrop

The Wayside
Concord, Massachusetts



THE · JUDGES' · CAVE

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Boston

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THE JUDGES' CAVE

Being a Romance of the New Haven Colony in the Days of the Regicides . 1661

BY

MARGARET SIDNEY [psend.]
Author of "A Little Maid of Concord Town," "Five Little Peppers," etc.

Illustrated by C. M. Relyea

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To the Citizens of NEW HAVEN IN CONNECTICUT *the Author dedicates this Historical Romance, written with a loving pen to do honor to the sublime part enacted by her Native Town in the stormy period it portrays*

Argosy 2 Mar. 1944

THE FIRST WORD

THE Author invites attention to one of the most dramatic episodes of the American Colonial period — one which, singularly enough, has had too scant notice from the pen of novelist or poet.

When a child, her home was bordered by the old New Haven Green, where with other children, unconscious of the sublime tragedy hidden beneath, she played above the ancient gray stones marked E. W. and W. G. in the rear of the historic Centre Church. These stones, through tradition well authenticated by the painstaking research of Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College, and by others, have always been believed to mark the resting-place of the two Regicides, Edward Whalley and William Goffe, who, in 1661, sought refuge in the protection of Pastor John Davenport in goodly New Haven Town.

And on the hanging cliff of West Rock, overbrooding the fair town, was the Judges' Cave, the Mecca to which her older feet turned, and from which she ever bore away a heart throbbing in sympathy, as she walked in imagination through

the stormy days of that exile when "God hid them in a cave and fed them with bread," and when the New Haven Colony saved them from the clutch of the pursuer who hounded their path.

Fair New Haven Town, sitting in serene beauty by thy shining harbor, gone is Pastor Davenport's goodly mansion, gone is the turreted meeting-house with "its six great gunnes," ruined is the cave on Providence Hill, sunken are the graves of the exiles; but evermore shall shine, on the brightest page of thy history, what thou didst for liberty, in perilling thine own safety to stand a bulwark of protection, beneath which lay sheltered the hunted Judges of Charles the First of England.

THE JUDGES' CAVE

I

THE forest was quiet. One could almost hear the stir of life in the underworld, beneath the pine needles, and below some tree trunk smitten prone before the blast of the storm or by the slow mildew of old age. The density of the shadows was unbroken save for the flickering gleam here and there through swaying foliage, that perchance off in the distances spread into dim lines of light and color.

Great branches lopped and twisted around each other and themselves, seeking one common overthrow; their trunks captured by a wild, rough tangle, impenetrable save where the hardy pioneer had blazed a trail for himself and those as hardy as he, who had come out to find a home in the new country. It was the primeval wilderness, fresh from God, that had waited the hand of His servant, the American Colonist.

On this thirteenth of May, 1661, in the goodly Colony of New Haven, could one have left this tiny thread of a trail between giants of the forest and their undergrowth, and stepped to an adjacent

rise, there might be seen curling against the sky a few slender spires of smoke that told of the Indian wigwams and camps of Amity. And nearer, at the foot of the hills, low-lying and secure, the eye would fall upon the large farm-lands of the rich settler, Mr. Goodyear, who brought out from England his farmers to work the land, while he himself followed commerce. There, below, might be seen the comfortable farm-house built by the wealthy merchant for Farmer Richard Sperry, who is afterward to come into possession of the great trail to be henceforward known as the "Sperry Farm"; and about a mile southwest in the woods, the observer on the hilltop might trace the thin, curling thread of smoke that located the dwelling of Ralph Lines; these two houses being at this time the only ones for a long distance to the west of New-Haven Town, with the exception of a few at Paugasset. All besides was unbroken wilderness.

To one who chanced to be on the trail blazed by the hardy pioneer, and shut into the well-nigh impenetrable wilderness, there was no hint of life save that of the harmless denizen of the wood, startled into motion by the foot of the intruder, and the ever haunting suggestion of lurking beast and serpent resentful of encroaching civilization.

In the early hours of this spring afternoon the forest life along this trail felt the expectant thrill, so to speak, that betokened the human footfall.

The pangs of fear this sound inspired made the denser forest to be sought; for one superior to this forest life, of the kind that had conquered it, was approaching. All but one of these original possessors of the wilderness in the shape of serpent and beast, precipitately fled; he, cruel, gaunt, and determined, stood his ground, willing to battle for his rights of ownership, and to gain a good supper thereby.

It was to be an unequal contest, or rather no contest at all, for the on-coming foot belonged to one who, though a stranger to fear, had little else as equipment for such an encounter. It was pretty Marcia Sabine, crooning a tune she had brought with her from her visit to her kin at New Netherland, and hasting on impatient feet to reach her home at Uncle Sperry's, that she might the quicker give the finishing touches to the preparations for the evening's merrymaking which was to celebrate her return.

The original possessor would have smiled at such easy prey, had he owned the gift of humor. As it was, he licked his chops and gloated over her a bit, before he announced himself and his intentions. The rest was quite simple, and when the time was up for entrance, he stepped composedly forth from his jungle, and stood across the path of the pretty intruder. For a breathing space the bear and Marcia surveyed each other and took measurements.

In a torrent descended upon her memory all the lapses from her strict home life, which the past few months at New Netherland with their gayer conditions had beheld. She shivered involuntarily at the tune she had just been crooning, and wished, oh, how fervently, that it had been a psalm, and that Parson Davenport were there to lead in prayer; none of his efforts in that direction could possibly be too long for her now.

But Marcia, on consulting the eye of the bear, felt that this was no time to be thinking of lapses of duty, or even of Parson Davenport and his prayers. As every nerve and muscle in her healthy young body objected to the plan outlined by the original possessor, she winged a prayer herself at swiftest speed to that God whom she had been taught to fear more than to love, and a sudden peace took possession of her, as of some overbrooding protection. She clenched her shapely brown hands, and looked steadily into the little cruel eyes before her.

But this plan, excellent as it was, only worked for a moment, while every chance of escape that swept through her brain seemed equally futile. Fleet of foot she was, it is true; no one who ever attempted it being able to outrun her. But the jungle forbade the adoption of this method against such unequal odds as the foot of the bear.

So for a moment the girl and the bear closely regarded each other without so much as moving a hair's breadth. On her part, the wild rush of consciousness proclaiming certain death took all power of prayer from her frozen lips and numbed every limb. Involuntarily she closed her eyes and waited for the end; and the bear, thinking it about time to bring matters to a close, leisurely drew himself together with a view to this procedure. Suddenly there rang out a cry that seemed to pierce the overhanging forest, and invade high heaven itself. The bear, startled at its suddenness, sat back a moment on his haunches and gazed curiously; still showing no displeasure at this small and unimportant delay in the execution of his rights toward a good supper. And then Marcia's lips closed over that fearful cry, frozen again as if already in that death she saw just beyond. She was past hearing the telltale crackling of the undergrowth, or seeing the quick turn of Bruin's head in its direction, and scarcely knew when a face looked out from the interstices of the forest, and a voice said, "Do not move."

But Bruin was fully aware of the new state of affairs, and his little eyes now gleamed with rising anger at the interruption to the rightful enjoyment of his meal. He gave a sharp grunt of displeasure, carrying a tone that meant business, and immediately down he went on all fours again and

loped forward to demolish this new intruder first of all.

Marcia, with a wild rush of hope at her heart, drew her breath hard and clenched her hands. There was a spring past her of a black heavy body, a sickening sense of the fate of another besides herself hanging in the balance, and then she turned her eyes to see the combat. Alas! unequal it was, it must be! For the stranger had naught but his courage and a goodly staff with which to wage his part of it. And the young woman, reprieved for a brief space, wrung her hands in speechless agony, more for him, her would-be rescuer, than for her own doom.

"Fear not," came the words, flung at her from the thick of the battle, and overtopping the angry snorts of Bruin, frantic to get at his prey, in the entangling undergrowth that crashed like splinters under his huge bulk; "I can subdue him. Do not move." Marcia, to save herself, could not have done this, so rooted to the ground was she by something much worse than fear for herself.

The forest now seemed to heave and to crack with the struggle. The giant trees looking calmly down upon the tumult appeared to sway before her eyes as Marcia, with head bent forward and eyes dilated with horror, watched the pitting of intellectual strength against pure brute force, until Bruin, wild with rage and pain from the blows the

stranger deftly wielded as he skilfully evaded any nearness to the huge black paws, gave a sharp cry, and with a mighty lunge seized the stranger in a death-dealing embrace — or so he thought. Instead, he was sinking to the ground, a clumsy black hulk, with a crash that to Marcia's startled nerves seemed a judgment echo.

"Fear not," repeated the stranger, drawing a long breath, and turning his back on the carcass of the enemy to approach the young woman; "he is quite dead."

He spoke easily, as if such an exhibit of strength was of everyday occurrence. And Marcia raised her blue eyes in wonder to his face. He was a trifle beyond middle life, not over tall, but of athletic build, and stern, it might be, of face, as the gravity that settled over lip and cheek and brow was of deep thought, engendered, perhaps, by the severity of the times. Yet, accustomed as she was to such serious lines in the countenances of the men prominent in the Colony, Marcia knew that here was no ordinary colonist. It was the face of a scholar and also a man born to executive affairs; and she gazed fascinated to forgetfulness of the danger scarcely removed.

"And now let me beg of thee to hasten on thy home-going," the stranger was saying, not taking his piercing eyes from her face, yet with a respectful homage to the fair cheek to which a faint color

was stealing back. "It behooves maidens not to stray far from the chimney corner in this new country. Do thou go before, and I will follow and see that no harm befall thee."

"But first let me thank thee, kind sir," cried Marcia, now in a fine glow that forgot dishevelled hair and hood cast away to the ground in the surprise of the attack; "but for thee I should have been —"

"Attempt not to talk of it," said the stranger, lightly, and swinging his oaken staff as if more exercise of the same sort would be quite to his taste. "Thy cry saved thee; but do not, I beg, venture out in this manner again. Hast thou no parents or brothers to advise thee to keep near to the home roof?"

"No one advises me," said Marcia, feeling her spirits returning to her, and beginning to laugh. "I go and come as I wish."

"So I should suppose," said the stranger, betrayed into a smile. Then he grew grave. "But this will not do. The times are troublous, and in the new settlement lurk dangers unseen."

"I am not afraid," said Marcia, throwing back her pretty head disdainfully; "nothing affrights me" — she turned a cold shoulder to the bear — "at least nothing but the wicked Regicides. Were I to meet one of them, I believe I should die of fright."

"Wouldst thou so?" asked the stranger, regarding his oaken staff curiously along its length, as if for possible inequalities of surface. "And may I ask why? I am told they are harmless enough, and only occupied with thoughts pertaining to their escape from their pursuers."

"And that is just it," cried Marcia, scornfully; "and why I should be so afraid is because I am not a man, and so cannot kill them. Oh, the wicked traitors to good King Charles!"

"Thou wouldst not betray them to their pursuers?" queried the stranger, releasing his eyes from their inspection of the staff to search the sweet curves of the mouth and cheek before him.

"Would not betray them?" repeated Marcia, with sparkling eyes. "Oh, would I not so? If God would only give the chance. So should all good servants of our gracious King do."

"But these Regicides may have been good men also," continued the stranger, "who thought they were following the dictates of their own consciences."

"I care not what they had done of good deeds," cried Marcia, ignoring the last part of the stranger's speech; "nothing would make me show mercy to one of them, were he in my power. But alas! that good fortune will never be mine," she said sadly, with drooping head.

"Probably not," said the stranger, carelessly. "And now lead the way, I pray thee, to thine home, and I will follow, lest peradventure some other bear may cause thee trouble."

"But do accept my thanks, I pray," cried Marcia, considerably put out at the cool reception of her gratitude. "It is no light thing to save a life," she added involuntarily.

"No light thing, indeed," responded the stranger. "I thank God that He put it in my power to save thine," and he bowed low before her. When he raised his head, Marcia saw that the gravity of his face had a sadness at once appealing and uplifting, and she felt herself strangely drawn to it. But he motioned for her to lead the way, while he waited for her to proceed.

"I am niece to Mr. Richard Sperry," she said over her shoulder as she stepped off reluctantly, wishing the interview might have been prolonged, if only for one more glimpse of the piercing dark eyes and the stern yet sad lines of the countenance in which they were set; "and once out of this forest, I know a short cut to his farm." How she wished that the stranger was coming to the merrymaking to-night. Would it do to ask him? She was of two minds about it. The uppermost one said yes, "And Uncle Sperry can thank him for me. At any rate he can but refuse." But before she could mould her thoughts into gra-

cious words, "I will see thee through this forest, then," came in such cold, crisp accents behind her that she lost heart and went on silently, glad she hadn't spoken. He bowed again low before her, as they stood in the edge of the clearing. Then he disappeared into the forest, and she ran, on vexed and impatient feet, in the direction of the farm.

"And the maidens even are against us," he was saying to the older man who, concealed in the forest depth, leaned against the tree to await his return.

"Yea, and not even gratitude can keep alive the spark of mercy," was the bitter reply of the other, pointing to the carcass of the bear.

"Say not so, father," quickly rejoined the younger man; "she knows not her heart, or I am no judge of a human face if, when the time comes, that maiden will not yield to all the soft impulses of woman."

"It may be so," said the other coldly. "Heaven grant we never have to trust to it. For I say she would give us up without a qualm to her 'gracious King!' And yet had you not conquered the bear, I should have stepped in to take a hand in the contest."

"I wish we could conquer all our enemies in this wilderness as easily as yonder bear," observed the younger man, dryly.

II

MARCIA was by no means free from vexation as the hour advanced for the gathering of the merrymakers, and the little frown puckering her brow gave signal of anger toward any so unlucky as to cross her mood.

"Why didn't I try my fate, and ask him? Uncle Sperry would gladly have welcomed him," she cried to herself over and over in all the busy tumult of laying out the feast, frugal enough as one would view it to-day, yet substantial and good; for Farmer Sperry was liberal handed and not averse to setting an example now and then to his fellow-colonists, of a wise departure from the severe lines of the ordinary meal of a puritanical pattern.

Strange to say, the peril she had been in had slipped lightly off from Marcia's mind, and she had not mentioned the episode in which the bear had figured, or her home-coming, but all her thoughts centred on the stranger; and for her life, she could not thrust his image from her consciousness. His piercing eyes seemed each instant

to burn into her soul, as she moved about the ample kitchen on hospitable thoughts intent; and angrier each moment she grew with herself, as she reflected that her failure to invite him to Uncle Sperry's as a mark of her gratitude had cost her the chance even to see him again.

"Most probable it is that he is on business for the Colonies," she said, as she recalled his fine and fluent speech, his white hands so different from the seamed and toil-hardened ones of the farmers of the settlement, and his aristocratic bearing. "He comes on a message from the King or the Parliament, I doubt not." And she bridled and tossed her head. This was quite to her liking, to have held audience with a person near to royalty; and dearly did she love to reflect that such was more than probably a fact. For the times were thrilling with the currents of communication with the mother country, to which the colonists were as yet the most loyal of subjects. And no one would have been surprised at entrance into the Colonies, of emissaries from Old England of various degrees of dignity and splendor, on as many different errands as could suggest themselves to an ingenious King, bound to keep order in his distant provinces, and to strengthen his authority and domain.

"Why was I such an idiot as to let him go without an effort?" she cried to herself through set

teeth. "I shall never see his like again. He surely looked into my eyes with"—a maidenly blush stole up to her cheek, and the word lost its way ere it reached the red lips. For a moment Marcia stood struck with pain in the part she had hitherto considered invulnerable, and she pressed her folded hands against her heart to still its new and unwonted throbbing.

At this most inopportune moment the voice she most dreaded to hear struck upon her ear. "Marcia! Marcia!" sang out Will Hepburn. She fancied there was a triumphant ring in the tone. Perhaps he was a trifle more secure in his aspirations; for this merrymaking had somehow assumed in the eyes of the young people bidden to it a significant aspect. Would not Marcia's betrothal be solemnly disclosed? they queried. Or at least, if matters had not really gone so far as to make that possible, surely Will, if he had in him a spark of manly independence would bring Marcia to terms, and make her listen to a love, seen in every glance of his patient eyes for years. Now on this most propitious celebration of her home-coming, surely it should disclose itself. So the young folks whose hearts beat just as romantically under their linsey-wolsey and fustian as those of the young people of our day, were at this moment hurrying to the house of Farmer Sperry. Some were on horseback; the girls on

pillions behind their swains, or where the distance would allow or no horse was available, walking by twos and threes all in great state, and in their "best bibs and tuckers," as the occasion demanded.

Marcia let a contemptuous thrill possess her. "If Will Hepburn thinks to be impertinent, I shall give him such a piece of my mind as will quiet him once and for all," she decided within herself.

"Why do you not speak?" cried Will. His manner had changed from their last meeting when he had deprecatingly begged by his silent presence for permission to breathe in whatever sunshine his fair love might deign to vouchsafe to him. But now something in his love-atmosphere buoyed his spirits above the horizon, for did not Farmer Sperry and his good wife smile conspicuously on his wooing? And though the good dame, who was always chary of speech, did not go beyond the complacent smile, that very afternoon Farmer Sperry had come to the point, and after some "hemming and hawing," had thus expressed himself: —

"Truly you have waited on the girl submissively enough to suit her whim," he had declared abruptly in the midst of their work on the outer edge of the farm where no women-folk would be supposed to hear — but Will's evil star was in the ascendant. "Now go and speak up like a man."

"I will!" cried Will, in a burst of sudden resolve, "and Marcia's heart will open — all maiden's do at a merrymaking such as this will be to welcome her home."

"Do they so?" cried Marcia softly to herself behind a neighboring thicket. She had come out from the farm-house with a message from her aunt, who was seized by one of those sudden panics invading womankind on the edge of an unwonted festivity. Goodwife Sperry declaring that no one but her husband could clear her mind in regard to it, the girl must run across the stubbly wild land to fetch him. But Marcia, on the brink of disclosing herself and her message, held it back, on these words arresting her steps.

"Ah, do they so, Master Will?" she cried softly to herself in her covert. "Well, and if you speak, sir, my open heart will greet you sore. You? oh!" and a sharp pain shot under her bodice, as she covered her face with her hands. Had she come to this? Not only Will was to suffer as a not-to-be homespun lover, but she as well; for what did the pain declare, but that her love unsought was given to the stranger of that afternoon's meeting? and waves of maidenly blushes swept over her face as she stole back to the house unattended.

"And thine uncle not with thee?" exclaimed her aunt, who, being somewhat delicate in health,

ruled the household to the extent of having such summons obeyed

"I didn't tell him," said Marcia, in a shamefaced way and hanging her head as she stood in the doorway.

Her aunt now transferred her astonishment to the girl. "And what did you go to the meadow for?" she demanded in a thin, high voice, displeasure on her brow.

"To call him, to be sure," answered Marcia, recovering herself with a laugh. "Don't mind me, aunt, I'm a silly to-day; I guess the company to-night has gone to my head."

"I should say so," replied her aunt, regarding her sharply. "Get along with thee, Marcia, and try a second time if thee can reach thine uncle. Or perhaps," she added in a sarcastic tone, "I had best despatch black Chloe."

Chloe, the old black woman, so stupid that she rarely had the felicity of being used as a means of communication, had also an infirmity that made her as deaf as a stone post. Marcia colored high, and sped off on angry feet.

"A plague on Will Hepburn for bringing all this trouble upon me!" she cried angrily to herself. It was not the first time in the history of the world that an innocent swain, whose only fault was that of loving too well, had served merely as a burden bearer of blame. Marcia finds the two men busily

at work, and blurts out her message carelessly, as if haste with the errand must cut short every unnecessary word, and speeds away again, her uncle loping after her. Will meanwhile casts regretful glances after them that he too has not a summons to the farm-house, and puts up extra braces for his hopes for the evening's opportunity.

At last the hour arrives for the merrymaking to begin; and the young men and women in such holiday attire as they can command, arrive upon the scene, determined to do honor to the occasion as in duty bound when Goodman Sperry and his wife bid them to a festive hour. Into the sanded keeping-room, so seldom opened that a company must always view it with awe when the door is thrown wide, they troop, the blushes running high on the cheeks of the girls, while the young men have all they can do to see that their hands and feet do not encroach on their neighbor's attention.

Upstairs in Marcia's room, a bevy lingers for ringlets to be curled, and ruffles and ribbons to be pulled straight after the long ride.

"Oh, Marcia," cried one more daring than the others, as she turned reluctantly away from the looking-glass, her fingers straying after refractory locks, "aren't you going to tell us something to-night?"

"What should I tell you, Sylvy?" bridled Marcia, knowing well what the little minx meant.

Had she not set her cap at Will Hepburn, making eyes at him each Sabbath day in the old meeting-house? And she laughed, Marcia did, a not unpleasant gurgle of amusement; still there was no sweet note in it.

"You know well enough," retorted Sylvy, the red dashing her high cheek-bones at a certain implication in Marcia's tones. "Is it not time to set poor Will at rest, and give us the news to-night?" and she glanced at the other girls meaningly.

"You seem wonderfully well taken up with Mr. Hepburn," observed Marcia, coolly; "perhaps you'd like to befriend him yourself, Sylvy."

"You're too unkind," cried Sylvy, her color flaming high; "you know he loves you; we all do, Marcia," and she looked ready to cry.

"That may be," said Marcia, composedly, giving her young arms, so pink and well-moulded beneath her muslin spencer, a restful stretch; "but as you all know I don't love him, why, you or any other girl can make up to him if you want to."

"And I am sure I don't go about making up to any man," exclaimed Sylvy rather too hastily for the right effect. This made the other girls titter, while Marcia laughed outright a happy, contented gurgle, as if Mr. Will Hepburn's happiness were a matter of no moment whatever to her.

"Hush, girls," cried Faith Latimer, interposing

with friendly intent; "let's talk of something else. I'm sure the times are troublous enough without our getting into unpleasantness."

"Shall it be on the dreadful story of the poor hunted Judges?" cried Sylvy, in a tone of spite. She had often longed for an open break between Will and Marcia on the ground of loyalty to the mother country; he being ready enough to serve England if her mandates were right, but if not, why then, forsooth, the work that Cromwell left might not be a bad cause to espouse; while Marcia Sabine, holding ill-concealed preferences for the Throne, right or wrong, and the purple and fine linen of royalty, vowed with her pretty head a-toss on its slender neck that she believed in the American Colonies only so far as they served the wishes and commands of England. "A pretty mess can I make of it between Will and her if Marcia will but speak her mind on this point to-night," Sylvy thought.

"But don't let us get on that subject," she added on a high key, "for it wouldn't make Marcia any sweeter."

"If you mean that I would disguise my true sentiments in order to be sweet," blazed Marcia, standing very tall in the doorway amid a knot of girls so that her words could be plainly heard beneath the low stairs, "then I am proud to say what every one of you knows already, that I am a

royalist through and through, and that everything that our good King and his Parliament do and say is true and right, and that I pity from the bottom of my soul the poor low creature who can think otherwise."

A hush fell upon the group. Faith caught her breath. "Let us go downstairs," she said. But Marcia waved them back. "And since you've brought this upon yourself, Sylvy, to speak my thoughts, I might as well tell you that were there no other reason for my despising Will Hepburn but this, we should never marry as long as this blue sky of God's is above us. What, marry him! A disobedient subject who denies the rightful power of the King of England to do what he will with his own subjects, and who turns traitor in every question possible in the Colony! Why, even this very day" — Marcia caught her breath and hurried on in a passion — "he spoke up for those dreadful murderers of our King — the wicked Regicides. Here in this Colony of New Haven it amazes me that one should be sunk so low as to espouse their wretched cause; in New Netherland it was not so. Oh, were I but a man!" Marcia clenched her brown fist hard, the girls, aghast and powerless, silently staring at her face. "I will live and die unhampered in my love for my rightful sovereign, King Charles the Second, whom I count it my good pleasure to serve at every chance

I may be happy enough to obtain." She bowed to them, with sweeping gestures of her long arms.

"You ought to go to England and live." Faith could not restrain herself from the words, uttered calmly, though with a touch of scorn, while her gentle face darkened. Sylvy smiled in glee at this outburst of Marcia's, and only trusted that Will had heard it.

"I wish from my heart that I could," sighed Marcia; and the noble face and figure of the stranger, eloquent of life amid large affairs that move the world, flashed before her. "If I were but in England, where I could live and die under my gracious sovereign's command, and not be forced to drag out an existence in this miserable Colony!" she added bitterly.

"Say not so," cried a voice harsh and excited, and Will Hepburn sprang up the narrow and winding stair. He seized Marcia's arm, and as the group of girls shrank away affrighted, he rushed on. "You are foolish to-night, Marcia; to-morrow you will repent it. And you, girls, do well to forget her words and come below." So he sought to turn off lightly her hasty speech. But it was the worst thing he could have done. Marcia's anger blazed high.

"Unhand me!" she cried, breaking away from him; "think not I will brook interference or obey command of yours. I repeat that I am glad to

own I know no allegiance save to my King — Charles the Second — and may God forever bless him," she added defiantly.

"So do we all say," Will hastened to cry. "He is our King, and we would all pray God bless him."

"How do you pray it?" Marcia turned to him in a fury. "Your mouths utter the words, but your hearts are all for breeding discontent and disloyalty in this Colony. I would sink the beggarly Colonies; yes, I would they had never been brought into existence. God grant they will never thrive, but that we may be gathered into England whence no misguided leaders shall draw us off again."

"It is not too late to explain your words, Marcia," cried Will, hoarsely, trying to seize her arm again. "Do be quiet," he begged piteously. But she swept by him as if she were royalty itself, and he but the veriest minion. "I have said my say," she cried, "and if any one does not believe me, it is not my fault. I say again I will live and die to serve my King."

"I believe she would actually betray those poor Judges," said Sylvy, under her breath, and with all her eyes on Will's blanched face. Faith laid her hand on the girl's mouth, but Marcia had heard the words. She turned in her tracks.

"*Judges?*" she repeated in white scorn. "*Regicides* you mean. Betray them? If you mean would I give any information whereby justice could overtake those murderous wretches who slew

their king, and then sneaked here to find refuge in our Colonies: why, indeed I would disclose their whereabouts; to earth and heaven I would shout it aloud, were I so happy as to know it. Oh, if God would only give me the opportunity and show me their hiding-place." She clasped her hands and glanced up to heaven, then without another word, she glided downstairs, and mingled with the company in the keeping-room.

"There is no use trying to get sense or reason into her," said Sylvy, in soft tones, creeping up a bit toward Will. But he turned abruptly and dashed down the stairs; the bevy of young women followed as best they could, and the festivities began, apparently as merrily launched as if no war of tongues had taken place, or declaration of principles had been thrown down.

The cider in flagon and cup, apples and nuts, and the sweet cake fried in long rolls or rings called doughnuts, were passing about. "Run, Marcia, and tell thy uncle to replenish the pitchers," whispered Goodwife Sperry, in the midst of the feast, to the tall girl with glowing eyes and red cheeks. How handsome she was! Yet Will shivered as he saw plenty of indications that she had a cold shoulder for him, and that she meant every word she had uttered.

Marcia, glad to be released from a scene that tired her ere it was scarcely begun, hurried off,

and, wondering where her uncle, who was a sociable man, and had gladly advanced the merrymaking, could be, she ran through the woodshed to its outer door, and peered into the darkness with puzzled eyes.

A pang struck her heart. "Why, where can he be? He must be sick," when a low voice fell upon her ear. Scarce knowing why, she stepped forth into the night, and followed the voice around the woodshed to a shaded copse. A few steps within, and, guided by earnest words in muffled tones, she stood face to face with Farmer Sperry and her acquaintance of the afternoon.

III

FOR the moment a silence as of death filled the space. The stranger was the first to speak, despite the frantic efforts of Farmer Sperry, who, coming to himself with a violent start, endeavored to prevent it.

"I shall throw myself on the mercy of this young woman," he said gently, yet his eyes held her with their piercing glance. "I am one of the Judges whose life is hunted."

Marcia thrilled from head to foot as if all the waves of a mortal peril were ingulfing her. She essayed to speak; but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth; all her pulses beat and throbbed and hammered at her brain in a senseless fashion, allowing her only to remember one word, "Judges." She would gladly have fainted and forgotten all, most especially those eyes holding her soul; but she did not come of a stock of fainting girls, nor yet did that stern and heroic time allow such gentle accomplishments in woman. So she simply held her breath, her lips refusing to repeat the hated word.

"Yes, I am one of the Judges." The stranger

said it calmly and deliberately, and folding his arms he suffered his eyes to remain riveted on her distressed face. "Now do with me as you like," he added, while Farmer Sperry in an agony of apprehension clenched his brown hands, and stood like a statue regarding the two figures.

But Marcia moved not, and a supreme moment slipped by noiselessly.

"I cannot," at last she said, shiveringly coming to herself; "you saved my life" — taking refuge in a glad thought that here was an escape for her.

"That makes small difference," scornfully cried the man — stranger no longer. "What is life?" he added bitterly. "Do with me as you will!"

"Are you mad?" exclaimed Farmer Sperry, springing forward in alarm. "Think of the — "

"Life is not to be thrown away," interposed the other hastily. "You do well to remind me." He bared his brow and looked up, the bitterness dropping from his stern face. His black hair was pushed aside with a weary hand, and for a breathing space he stood thus, regardless of all else but his own thoughts.

"And you," — he turned at last to the shrinking girl who had folded her hands, her gaze still intent on his face, — "you would give me my life in exchange for my poor service to you. Ah, you have gratitude!" His eyes burned soft and luminous into hers. "You do well, sweet maiden;

it becomes you to have the grace of gratitude." He bent and touched his lips to her bright hair.

Marcia fell to her knees and sobbed through tremulous hands that now covered her face. "Oh, sir, I swear to you I will serve you; on my bended knees I swear I will never disclose what I know, and I will help you in every way I can." She went off into a deep fit of weeping that left no strength for speech. Farmer Sperry raised his clenched hands to heaven and silently thanked God, knowing well the temper of the girl before him who had never been known to break her word.

"And one other?" queried the hunted man, slowly. "I have one bound to me by ties of kin and suffering. Will you promise this also in regard to him, dear maiden?"

"I promise," sobbed Marcia, "the same for him, whoever he may be, if you want it."

"Then may God forever bless you!" he exclaimed in deep emotion, and laying both hands on her head in benediction. "Father, come forth, — we are safe, — in this maiden's hands;" and before Farmer Sperry could raise a word of objection he had led from the copse an old man and set him in the midst.

"I am well pleased for him more than for myself that this night has brought us to your door," he bowed low before her. "Now to your ten-

der mercies we commend for protection our poor hunted bodies."

"Marcia, think," begged her Uncle Sperry with trembling accents, "where can we hide them? Mr. Jones has conducted them here — they have been wandering in the wood — the pursuers are sharp on their track — we must be quick, or all is lost." He brought this out in disjointed sentences, each striking a knell on the girl's heart. She sprang to her feet.

"The loft above the corn chamber," she said hoarsely, none too soon. A bevy of startled girls, some wringing their hands, and all endeavoring to disclose by confused cries the cause of their alarm, rushed through the kitchen doorway and around the thickly sheltered copse of the houseplace, followed by their swains. "Marcia — oh, Marcia — Mr. Sperry — oh — oh!" And after them came a man's voice, "Stand back, sirs, would you affright the women thus harshly!"

"Follow me, in God's name!" exclaimed Marcia, seizing the hand of the younger stranger, who gently pushed forward to her notice the older man. "Another moment and you are lost. Uncle Sperry, stay there; they will not suspect me."

Now, for the first time, there was a glad throb that the dreadful utterances remorsefully sweeping their memories over her soul — spoken such a short space before, as man calls time, but now an

eternity to her — were to bring a return tide of good. "They will not suspect me," sang through and through her heart, as she hurried the two men through the corn chamber, and saw the strength of the younger, which seemed indeed to be herculean, swing the heavy trap-door in the ceiling back on its rusty hinges; felt rather than saw, for she was now nearly spent, that both forms were safely drawn up within the loft above — heard the whispered, "May God forever bless you!" as the stranger who had saved her life disappeared, and the trap-door gently closed on its secret. Then she walked out to the babel of fright and indignation surrounding two determined men who never by any student of the affairs of that day could be mistaken for colonists: even had not their red coats and fine equipment of arms introduced the smart young Englishmen.

"Marcia — Marcia!" screamed Sylvy in a transport of excitement, rushing at her as soon as the girl's white face appeared. "Oh, don't help to find those poor hunted creatures. Don't let her help, Mr. Sperry. She'll do it because she said so." The whole group immediately parted and involuntarily surrounded her, Will Hepburn by a long stride endeavoring to put himself in front. He was too late.

"Ah!" cried one of the men, "you are the good loyalist we are after." He pushed Will a

trifle roughly aside, to get another look at Marcia's face.

"Have a care, sir," cried Will, with flashing eyes, "the maiden is not used to rough ways of addressing."

"I ask your pardon, fair damsel," cried the other with a show of courtesy too thinly assumed to bespeak the gentleman; "but these are rough times, and my errand demands haste."

"You do not need to beg my pardon," cried Marcia, tossing Will's hand aside. Her face, no longer white, was raised, and her lips parted in a smile. "You speak well, good sir, I am a royalist to my heart's core, and anything my King wants at the hands of a poor girl like me shall be done, with my life." She raised her hands and held them both out to the eager man, his comrade pressing forward in delight.

"Now, by my soul, this delights me!" exclaimed the Englishman, — Kellond, his name, — while a groan of deep despair smote the air. She trembled, Marcia did, as she recognized the voice of Farmer Sperry convulsed in an agony. But she did not turn her head, as she smiled into the glad triumphant faces before her.

"To find such loyal support cheers us well," the man was saying.

"Your King will reward you nobly," said the other man in a burst.

"Speak not of reward!" cried Marcia, haughtily, her face paling in anger. "Is it not enough to please my King?" She bowed humbly and folded her hands across her breast.

"Are you mad?" cried Will Hepburn at her ear. "End this talk, which is unseemly for a girl, and leave us to deal with the fellows." But again Marcia shook him off as if a rabbit had obstructed her path.

"I have information to give you, good sirs," she said in a clear, high voice, and she moved carelessly away until she stood nearly beneath the old windows of the loft above the corn chamber. "I was crossing the wood this day on my return from the settlement market-place, and speeding fast, as friends were bidden to keep us company and make merry this night." She waved her hands at the horror-stricken group. Faith Latimer had sunk to the ground and was sobbing silently. Sylvy was wringing her hands and protesting loudly that she was frightened to death, edging each moment nearer to Will, who stood like a statue, with blazing eyes and white lips.

"Yes — yes," assented the man, eagerly. "Kirk, hold your tongue" — unceremoniously to the other emissary. "I can get it out of her quicker. And you met the bloody murderers of our gracious King?"

"Hold thine infernal tongue, unholy man!"

cried Will, darting forward in a passion, with hand uplifted.

"Once more I tell thee to be quiet," cried Marcia, turning to Will. "I can take care of myself, and need no interference from thee."

"Well said, pretty one," laughed the man called Kirk, "and it behooves thee to have no more to do with traitors to their King. All such friends would best be shaken off before the final reckoning comes."

"Hold thy foolish tongue, Kirk," cried the other, angrily; "precious moments are being squandered while you must addle us with your talk. Let the maiden alone; I will get the truth if you will but be quiet. Now, sweet loyalist, I beg you in the name of our most sovereign and mighty King Charles, the son of the murdered Monarch, to end this conversation quickly, and tell us, who are nearly spent already with our search, when and where you had trace of the fugitives."

"You do well to protect me from interruption," cried Marcia, loudly, all her composure returning to her face, "for I shall tell thee. My friends have heard me but this very evening proclaim that I should aid in every way I can this search for these hunted men. Listen! I met a man, who I feel most sure was one of them —"

"Where? where?" cried Kellond, feverishly. His hand sought his pistol belt involuntarily and

tapped a folded paper in his breast pocket as if more powerful than either powder or ball.

"It was just within the wood," said Marcia, deliberately and with great distinctness. "Just where, I cannot tell thee, for I was speeding out of the path, being in a great hurry, and he — he was in haste, too, and after him an older man. And they asked the way to the high road to Manhattan, and I, — O God, forgive me, for I knew not who they were, — I told them as best I could. And he, the younger one, said, 'Father, you are too tired to go farther this day. We are quite safe here; let us rest awhile before we go hence.' Oh, why did I not know who they were! I have been away from the Colony to other kinsfolk and returned but two days ago," she mourned.

"Now, by my soul," cried Kellond, most joyfully, digging his heavy boot into the ground in his glee, "we will soon have the scoundrels within our grasp, if thou couldst only tell us the exact spot. Girl, canst thou not remember?" He seized her slender arm, but Will tore off the grasp and flung the hand back to him.

Kirk, notwithstanding his eagerness for the information, could not restrain a smothered gurgle of amusement at his companion's discomfiture.

"Oh, that I could!" cried Marcia, wrinkling her pretty brows in confusion. "Stay, I think I have it." She considered a moment, lost in deep

thought, while Kirk and Kellond illy concealed their impatience by kicking the ground with their spurred boots, and swearing at each other under their breath.

"Yes, methinks this is right," said Marcia at last, raising her head in joy. "I was coming from the settlement, so it must have been on this side." She pointed off in that direction. "I have such a poor head for thinking it out to tell such things. But still I remember that the trail was to my left, at least for a little way. Oh, let me think a bit more." Kellond gnawed his long mustache in rising anger, and he put forth a hasty hand that was withdrawn on a view of the passionate face still close to the girl's, as if determined to do guard to the last.

"I cannot, I cannot," moaned Marcia, when the silence became too painful to be borne; "but I can see it all as plain as day. Oh, I can go to it, and my steps not falter; and go I will, good sirs," —she drew herself up,—"and help you to find these wicked men. This way. Come on!"

"Now in God's name what would you do?" bellowed Will, beside himself with rage, attempting to hold her back.

"Unhand me! Uncle Sperry, make him let me go!" screamed Marcia. "Go, I will. I have warned you all but one short hour ago that I would help by every means in my power to find these men. Come on, good sirs, follow me."

She stepped off, Farmer Sperry grasping Hepburn's arm as he plunged after her.

"You anger her," warned the farmer. "You know of old we cannot drive the girl. These men dare not do her harm. And I shall send Poganuc after her; he would kill any who laid a hand to her. But do not you stir a foot, or she will do I know not what." With this warning he left the young man paralyzed with anger, fright, and amazement.

"Unhappy girl!" called Will after her retreating footsteps, as she disappeared followed by the two Englishmen, Kellond swinging his lantern derisively at the agonized group, and making low bows of pretended courtesy. "You have sold all that makes life dear—your love of country. Oh, may God defend you," he burst out, as his grief for her overcame him, "and keep your poor victims safe from you and such as you!"

It required but a moment for a tall, powerful Indian, with tawny face and set jaws, to be fitted out with a lantern, and a stout bludgeon to keep company with his hunting-knife. He then swiftly traversed the intervening patch of open meadow, and lost himself in the forest in the wake of the searchers for the Judges of King Charles the First.

IV

AT last unhappy England, torn with internecine disturbance, was nearing the end ardently longed for by those who sought the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne. It was the closing day of the struggle so brilliantly and hopefully opened by the Protector of her liberty, and a twelvemonth before the year in which our story opens. The sky was pink with the dawn of a new day, and flushed with the royal hopes and aims of the heir to him whose knell had struck at Whitehall.

Although the proclamation announcing Charles the Second King of England had not yet been announced to a listening world, the Restoration was practically a completed thing.

Dark below this pink sky of hope and victory, shooting high in the heavens, ran the heavy bar of warning for certain souls who had fallen athwart the displeasure of the royal family and its adherents. The House of Stuart and its loyal servants would not be likely to forget even so much as one of these souls, who all in good time should receive due attention, mark you! And he who was not

diverted by pink skies beyond casting an eye below their soft allurements, would naturally catch a hint, if no more, of contrasting hues of less roseate promise. Certain it is, that offenders of various stripes and degree, who would be likely to attract the notice of King Charles the Second, were now hieing with all due speed to shelters that commended themselves, until at least it could be observed which way the wind might blow.

Of all persons to be under the ban of the royal displeasure, none were so surely marked as the Judges, appointed in the original commission, by Parliament, for the trial of King Charles the First, who were responsible for his death. Of those fifty-nine persons who signed the warrant for the execution of the King, fully twenty-four had escaped by slipping into their graves. The trail of bloody torture and death that overtook some of those remaining, marked the path of the others who in the year 1660 should tarry to see the pink dawn of the Restoration in its splendor of fulfilment.

It was May. The hawthorn was abloom recklessly; the earth, upheaving in its unrest, was clothed in its riotous green, and trees were flinging wide their arms to heaven with draperies that arched and twisted above the sins and righteousness of their little worlds beneath. The busy toil of the myriads of nature's silent workers that

struck all this into life was only equalled by that of her co-workers who wrought with her, under the hand of the Master. It was tumult in London Town in the year 1660 (although we of to-day think progress reserved for our superior executive administrations), as man rushed to and fro intent on power, fame, and influence, and always and ever the mad chase for the clutch of gold.

Getting free of the throng infesting the streets of the seething town, to thread one's way on the by-paths that trailed to the wharves, on this May morning in the year of our Lord 1660, the pedestrian could fall in with more than one group bound shipward that might bespeak interest to the follower. Down past the shops and warehouses, trailing after one such little company may repay the readers of this romance for any loss of time involved. And so we invite you.

The group consisted of the mixed quality of passengers intent on reaching the *Prudent Mary* anchored at the wharf, her sails flapping with the wind as if anxious to be on her way to Boston Town in Massachusetts Colony, her captain and crew in all those stages of despatch and confusion that indicated the countless last things be fore the word "Go!" might slip her from her moorings.

In this little company were two men who struck the casual observer as a quiet and modest couple

about to leave Old England for reasons equally quiet and modest. But to one with an eye below surfaces a single glance was not sufficient, and the second revealed in the older and taller man, his face furrowed deeply by nothing less than great responsibilities, a certain majesty of inward repose whose roots struck deep. This man, you felt, was master of himself, despite his whitened hair and beard and the little droop in his tall and stalwart figure. The other was younger, and looked from piercing black eyes upon the little world around him and over the sea awaiting him with an eager gaze, as if life were but just beginning. Whatever disappointment England might have had, — and the firmly compressed lips told nothing, — there beyond in the new home should be wrested a partial compensation. There was no suspicion of a droop in the younger man's strongly knit figure. He had great difficulty to restrain a military stride now and then, and his right hand sought ever and anon his side beneath his ample cloak, in a manner to suggest a sword. At such moments the hand was followed and softly enfolded by that of his wife, a gentle creature who walked at his side, with composed face beneath her delicate muslin cap, and naught about her to tell of the tumult within.

"Frances, I hold myself in check, fear not, dear heart," at such a time he answered, and though he tried to smile, it was like Love looking out of a

barred portal. "Do not grieve. You will come to me and with our children."

She smiled up into his stern, set face. "Yes, dear husband," was all she could answer,—even this in a whisper, with occasional glances on the groups preoccupied with their own leave-takings; —"but do thou be careful, William."

"Nay, nay," he warned her, more by his eyes than the whispered word. "Speak not my name further. I am William Stephenson to the ship's crew and passengers, thou must bear in mind." She assented, with a little thrill of repulsion, "I will not forget again."

"And remember that in our letters all must be as agreed. Hold it in sharp remembrance, I pray thee, dear wife."

Again she bowed her gentle head on its slender neck, pressing her hand upon her bosom to repress the sighs with which it seemed to be rending itself.

"Pastor Hooke will be a tower of strength to thee, Frances," he said as they neared the vessel rocking by the wharf-edge. Involuntarily she clung to him with a little cry.

"How now," and he made himself smile as he looked down into her face, and his strong hand clasped hers tightly, "that is not like thee, Frances, brave, true heart. Fear not, he has promised, and he is a holy man, born of God and cannot lie."

"Oh, my husband!" She gave one shuddering gaze at the vast and heaving sea, then threw her arms around him. "I cannot let thee go!" she wailed, and her head sank on her breast. The other passengers turned involuntarily, and then back again with a new thrill to their own partings.

"Daughter," the elder man had not before spoken, "sad would be the day in which I should regret thy birth. Thou hast been a good and duteous child. See to it that thou belie not thy training." His hands lingered long on her head, where he placed them as he bent over her to say the words in a voice that none but she, and he on whose breast she lay, might hear.

"Thou shalt have no more cause to reproach me, father." The lady raised her head proudly on her stately neck and looked at him steadily. "See, I am calm. Go thou, my husband." She turned again to him, and let her blue eyes, tearless now, rest upon his impassioned ones, that were looking down into her soul. "And as truly as there is a God in heaven," she raised her slender arm from which the lace fell away, "so surely shalt thou be kept in His hand. I know it."

Instinctively the piercing eyes dropped in reverence over the hand he held. "God be praised!" ejaculated the elder man, as the crowd thickened, congesting around the point of embarkation, where amidst the rattle of on-coming belated cargo, and

passengers, and friends to bid good-by to departing ones, and crew, and servants of the ship-owners, the babel of the place and occasion was at its height. So much there was to do, it did not seem as if the *Prudent Mary* could possibly unmoor that day. Instead, as if by magic, in a good half hour, friends and families were parted, one group on the wharf, the other, with the two passengers we have followed, divided by the railing on the ship's side, and the *Prudent Mary*, with her gallant Captain Pierce at the helm, was slipping off into the waves that gently lashed the wharf. And there was no one to point the finger and say "on that receding vessel are the two Regicides, Whalley and Goffe, whom, more than any others, the avengers of the executed King desire to have."

Perhaps had we not been so busy in scrutinizing the two singled out for our notice, other names on the ship's roll of passengers would have claimed some attention. William Jones and wife of London need have no fear of our indifference, as we shall meet them again, when ample amends shall be made; and so Daniel Gookin — the one to settle in a quiet well-to-do way on the edge of Boston Town in Cambridge, the other to go with his heiress bride to her elegant colonial mansion in New Haven Colony, left vacant by her father, Governor Eaton, where she shall (and one glance at her sweet and piquant face tells that she knows it

already) queen it right royally in a way to hold the most conservative of colonists to her sway.

Winds and waves and God's benison over all assisting, Old England's colonies of her new world shall gather them in, none too soon. The turbulent Sea of Restoration is even now sending out stormy tides of vengeance; but the *Prudent Mary* is true to her name, and is by now sheltered from the gale.

The ship's crew and passengers have cause to bless the presence aboard of Edward Richardson and William Stephenson. None such for many a voyage have raised the tedious hours of the slow journey up to a delight; and by speech that graced a mental activity and physical alertness did especially the younger of the two friends seek to beguile the time for himself and fellow-passengers. As for the elder, as was natural, he was perhaps more content to be quiet, pacing for hours the little deck, a silent observer of all that went on around him. But William Stephenson mingled freely with those shut up with him in the small quarters afforded on the *Prudent Mary*, making many friends, and it occasioned no surprise therefore to see, when the port of Boston Town was reached, that the Gookin family had claimed him and his companion as visitors to their Cambridge home. Once feeling the ground of Boston Town under their feet, they were Edward Richardson and William Stephenson no more. It

was safe to breathe God's air, and yet be known as Edward Whalley and William Goffe; and armed as they were with their testimonials of various sorts from godly persons in Old England, Governer Endicott himself could have no reason for any lack of hospitality. The proclamation of Charles the Second as King of England is now scarcely on its way through Barbados, drawing after it the chain of condemnation for those who maltreated his royal predecessor. But this is all unknown in Boston Town, and the eyes of the two apostles of freedom gleam with an almost joyous expectation of much for their activities to work upon, along the lines of civil and religious liberty. And so the months passed from the 22d of July, 1660, the day of their arrival, until the following February — pitiful respite as men call Time, but something to hold gratefully to their hearts in after years when the hounds of political vengeance were scenting their every footstep.

The Rev. John Davenport sat in his study lost in thought. It was a cold, cheerless day in early February, in the year 1661. Before him, on his oaken table, was spread a letter over which he pondered long and deeply. His small face and delicate features with their short white beard, underneath the black round cap, impressed at first perhaps more of goodness and love upon the observer than of stern purpose within. Yet the

eye glowed with determination and fire, and the thin lips tightly set betokened a will worthy of the man who defied the "powers that be" in the mother country, and backed up by his conscience and his God, cast his lot with the Colonies of the New Commonwealth across the sea. His figure, thin and worn with years, — and that corrosion of anxiety worse than the work of time, — was partially hidden by the folds of his gown, whose broad white bands across his breast were, as ever, of immaculate stiffness and purity, attesting the faithful care of his spouse.

Anon he would glance up from the letter before him, allowing his gaze to wander through the small paned window of his study, to the meeting-house in all its rugged simplicity. There it stood, the first one built in New Haven, a rough structure, fifty feet square, surmounted by a small turret. Three of the six "greate gunns" that belonged to the town guarded it in front, the other three being used as a defence to the waterside of the settlement.

How different from the picture upon which his eyes had rested in Old England! He, by common consent, one of the finest preachers of London, and the beautiful years of his early married life spent amid the harmonies of congenial surroundings — how the heart of the old man swells as he lives it all over again! Then the black cloud

of persecution settling above his head; swift result of the shouts in the King's ear of that hated thing "a Puritan"; then the flight from Archbishop Laud to Holland, and later on to New England, the banner in his sturdy old hand streaming forth the call to civil and religious liberty.

He recovers himself with a sigh, his thin fingers tapping nervously the open letter before him from William Hooke, his colleague and teacher, back in England, where he had been recalled by Cromwell to be his private Chaplain and Master of Savoy Hospital in Westminster, but now living in obscurity, forced upon him by the on-coming of the Restoration. The very touch of the letter sends Parson Davenport off again on a stream of remembrance.

Most pitiful of all, how his prospects for the founding of the college, his dearest wish and hope for the Colony, had dwindled and well-nigh perished! Church and State had failed of that complete union for which he had toiled and prayed, as only the colonist could. Political forms set in motion for human aggrandizement, and worked to achieve selfish ends, were already supplied with powerful enginery and slowly divorcing the State from the leadership of the Church. This had been dimly foreseen and dreaded; yet the bright star of the educational work that was to save all from corruption, and raise up teachers for

the people, had hung high in the heavens above him and beckoned him on.

Of late a depression had been eating his heart out concerning the fulfilment of this hope. Delay after delay had met its presentation at the General Court; and although Rev. Mr. Davenport and Mr. Hooke had both been present at these assemblies, exhorting speed to the work, and a committee had been appointed, the project still lagged.

So on this gloomy February day, the fine nerve of the venerable man, though seldom deserting him, was under heavy assault.

A rap at the door, and Mistress Davenport's head, a muslin cap over the soft, silvery hair, cautiously appeared.

"I beg thy pardon, husband," she said, with all the deference due the sacred office of her spouse. "I would not willingly disturb thee; but Jedediah Beetle is without in the kitchen and desires audience."

"And is Jedediah Beetle of such consequence as to bring thee from thy work, and to disturb me at mine?" queried the minister in reproach in which a trifle of impatience lurked.

"I could not well avoid it," sighed Mistress Davenport, her gentle head drooping at the unusual tone; "for he insists that he has somewhat of importance to communicate to thee, and into thy hands alone."

"Show the fellow in," said Minister Davenport, not so careful now to conceal his irritation. He pushed hastily aside the papers, the letter that had awakened the painful train of thought being laid in the table drawer beneath his hand, as his wife deprecatingly withdrew into the kitchen, and the unwelcome visitor awkwardly shuffled in.

He was a tall, lank man, who seemed constitutionally too tired to hold his backbone straight; and between rubbing his big brawny hand across his mouth, and incessantly pulling his forelock, a wisp of uncombed hair hanging over his forehead, he was too occupied to do aught else but grin in a complaisant fashion at his good luck in being admitted to the minister's study.

Parson Davenport surveyed him calmly, having recovered his customary composure. Surely the village ne'er-do-well should not lead him astray in a matter of temper, and cause him an extra hour in wrestling on his knees in repentance. "What is it, Jedediah?" he asked, not unkindly.

"I'll shet the door, Passon, ef you please," said Mr. Beetle, commonly called "Jed" through the length of the village. Swelling with importance, he performed that act, stumbling over everything movable in his track, to the detriment of the polished legs of the chairs.

"Ye see ther might somebody see me give you this 'ere," he said, as he lumbered up to the min-

ister's chair, and drawing out of his fustian jacket a parcel, held it gripped fast. The minister's fingers closed over it.

"Where did you get it?" he asked quickly, with a keen glance into the flushed, grinning face.

"Ye see," began Jed in a deliberate fashion, marking off each syllable carefully on his grimy palm, with a still dingier forefinger, "I was a-comin' along the Boston Town road; I'd been out to see ef Ezekiel Hapgood had any work. It beats all how I have to dig and delve."

"It is not often, Jedediah, that that charge can be laid at your door," the minister could not help replying dryly, "unless it is at the tap-room of the Tavern."

"That's jest it, Passon," broke in Jed, with the freedom of the privileged character to whom all people turned in trouble — withal well sneered at by thrifty neighbors. "An' I so hardworkin' that even a dog 'ud pity me. It's a pizen shame," he added, with a burst of injured innocence.

"Never mind now," commanded Parson Davenport, shortly, "and get to your story at once. Where obtained you the packet?" His fingers played with the big red seal trembling to get at the contents.

"Well, as I was a-sayin'," began Jed, rolling his quid from one cheek to the other. At any other time the minister would have had a sharp rebuke

for all such indulgence; but in his impatience to arrive at the explanation of the arrival of the packet by such messenger, and his desire to get Jed from the apartment, this was silently passed by. "I was a-comin' from Hapgood's, I thought maybe he knew of —"

"Yes, yes," broke in Parson Davenport, impatiently, "that is of no consequence — I must hear."

"No consequence!" Jed's customary reverence for the ministerial presence did not prevent him from bursting in with astonishment; "why, you've allers been a-hammerin' at me, Passon, to work, and now I'm a-tryin' —"

"Of course, Jedediah, I have," answered Parson Davenport, quickly; "but this is neither the time nor place to go into detail about the matter. What I want to know is who gave you this packet?" He leaned back in his chair, and tapped the parcel in his hand with his long, nervous fingers.

Jed, deprived of his usual mode of telling a story, fell helpless at once, and stupidly stared at the ceiling. "I d'no," at last he drawled.

"Surely you must know all the townspeople," cried the minister, quite wrought up at that. "No one comes in contact with every man, woman, and child in the settlement more than you do, Jedediah Beetle."

"'Twarn't none of our folks," said Jed, still re-

garding the ceiling. "Blamed ef I ever set eye on the critter afore."

"Use no profane words in my hearing," warned the minister, harshly, "else the public stocks shall make you repent it."

Thus adjured, Jed brought his gaze down from the ceiling, and solemnly protested in frightened accents that he "warn't meanin' to swear, he warn't; he'd be blamed ef he was. He meant he'd never do so no more." And he didn't truly know who the man was, who, coming along Boston Town road that morning on horseback, had overtaken him, and held out the packet to him, bidding him use all speed to give it into the Parson's hand.

"This morning?" repeated Parson Davenport in dismay. "And now long past the noon hour."

"Yes, ye see," said Jed, feeling some adequate explanation necessary at this point, "it was jest this way."

"No long talk on your part is required, Jedediah. Why did you not deliver this packet at once?" demanded Parson Davenport, his keen eyes blazing with indignation, as he started forward in his chair.

Jed's tongue flapped idly against the roof of his mouth as he essayed to reply; but no words came.

"Out of my presence!" commanded the minister at length, each precious minute with the packet unopened in his hand weighing him down with

a nameless dread. "I will deal with your case later." And Jedediah Beetle lunged unsteadily out into the more friendly precinct of the big kitchen, scarce knowing himself for the swelling individual who, but a few moments before, had passed over the sacred threshold, rejoicing to meet the minister in his study.

V

"IT'S all up with me," groaned Jed, stumbling over to the settle by the fire, and leaning his elbows on his knees, his head sunk to his hands.

"Art thou sick, Jedediah?" asked gentle Mistress Davenport, her tone full of pity as she crossed the sanded kitchen, not without a sigh, despite her heart intent on mercy, at Jed's dirty and rough boots.

"Oh, dretful!" sighed Jed, drawing a long breath of relief at this question. "'Twon't never do to tell her the Passon's mad at me, an' maybe he won't put me in the stocks, after all," he said to himself. "Oh, such a misery in my stomach!" He clapped both hands to that region, rolled up his eyes, and squirmed all over the seat of the settle.

"Poor man!" exclaimed the minister's wife, compassionately; and mentally deciding in favor of boneset, she hastened to the corner beam, where from a nail dangled a supply of that goodly herb ready for such emergencies. "Try and control thyself, Jedediah, and, please God, I will soon have thee better."

"Oh, 'tain't that, Mistress Davenport," cried Jed in anguish, eying these preparations. "I ain't a-needin' med'cine an' purgin'. I'm all holler like, 'cause I ain't eaten nothin' for so long. Oh, dear me! I guess I'm a-dyin' an' goin' to eternity," and with a worse contortion than former efforts had achieved, he lay prone and stiff along the settle length.

"In that case, thou need'st spiritual treatment," observed Mistress Davenport, deserting the bundle of thoroughwort, "and I must call Parson Davenport to minister to thy soul," and she turned to the study door.

"Oh, Mistress Davenport!" cried Jedediah, springing to a sitting posture, to seize her blue stuff gown with an anguished hand, "don't call him yet, at any rate, not till I've had somethin' to eat, I'm all holler like, an' I can't reflect—an' don't call him yet."

Mistress Davenport paused; but although her conscience told her this was not the usual order of dealing with tenderness on spiritual subjects, she said with a sigh, "Jedediah, you are a sinful man to count the needs of the body more than those of the soul." Yet she turned abruptly into the buttery.

Jedediah had time to duck with an uncontrollable giggle beneath his long arms, from which he came up with solemn face and humble mien

as she approached with a generous plate of remnants from the noonday meal.

"Eat your dinner, Jedediah," she said, "and remember that sickness and suffering are often the best of warnings given by God to make us sinful creatures reflect on His mercy and turn in time."

"Yes'm," said Jed, in meek subjection, his teeth well set in the depths of meat surrounding a chicken leg saturated with gravy. Praying inwardly that the minister might not be apprised of his presence in the kitchen, he despatched the victuals with a degree of haste that bore out the story of his famishing condition, and at last stood straight and addressed the mistress. She had taken her knitting to a distant corner to watch him, before she sat down to her spinning. "That jest teched th' spot," he declared, indicating the region referred to. "Thank ye, Mistress Davenport," and he shuffled to the door.

"Jedediah, I doubt not the minister will be ready to talk with thee on thy soul's salvation now," said Mistress Davenport, putting her knitting aside. "I am rejoiced if thou hast experienced any thoughts, however rude, about eternity," and she got out of her chair.

"I can't now, Mistress Davenport," exclaimed Jed, edging to the door to lay a hasty hand on the latch. "I ain't ready. I've — I've got to reflect more."

"But none of us are ready," said Mistress Davenport, her gentle face growing stern. "It is God's grace that saves, and not we ourselves. Delay not a moment, sinful man, for the devil would have you and sift you as wheat."

But Jed ducked and was out the door. "Well, if he gets to sifting me, he'll find the best lot o' vittles aboard I've had for many a day," he muttered, streaking it across the "meeting-house green," to lose himself in the straggling settlement beyond.

A righteous indignation pervading her bosom, Mistress Davenport gingerly picked up the plate that Jed had effectually cleared, and after thoroughly restoring its cleanliness and replacing it by its fellows on the dresser, she sat down to her spinning-wheel, the irritation by no means leaving her brow.

The shadows deepened over the dull landscape. Across the road at Mr. William Jones's mansion they were beginning to light the candles in the handsome apartments. The short February day was at its wane. Suddenly the study door opened, and the minister's face appeared.

"I shall require no supper to-night, my dear."

"Oh, husband!"—all her wifely instincts rebelled at this. "Thee fasted but yesterday. Do not so soon again, I beg. Thou art not strong enough." Her hands fell slack at her sides, and she looked at him imploringly.

"Do not fear," said Parson Davenport, gently. "A man is never harmed on his knees before God. I must think and pray," and the door was shut by a determined hand.

"And John is away," communed the anxious wife with a foreboding gloom oppressing her of a silent evening with nothing to break the stillness. "Oh, that I had a daughter now to make the old house a cheerful abiding place!" Then she stifled a sigh, as she remembered that she had her Bible and could commune with God; and the feeling that she should also be on her knees, as well as her husband, sent her to the bedroom where she knelt long, wrestling with the Almighty, until that degree of submission was obtained that she called peace.

While the mistress of the parsonage was thus engaged at her devotions, the minister, arising from his knees, donned his thick cloak, sallied forth too quietly to attract attention, and bent his steps toward the large, hospitable mansion across the road. A grand house it was for the time, built by Governor Eaton, who spared no money upon its construction, nor upon the elegance of its furnishings. It even boasted a library; and when lighted up, and fires crackling in its dozen and seven fireplaces, as tradition goes with guests coming and going in the spacious halls and apartments, it was a splendid sight, and one that duly

impressed itself upon the simple folk of the Colony as befitting the dignity of the office of its owner. Now it was the home of the Governor's son-in-law, William Jones, who had come out from England, as we have seen, on the *Prudent Mary*.

Rev. Mr. Davenport, with head bent, and steps slow but determined, seemed to be absorbed with some unusual anxiety, and the lines of his face appeared to tell of a past struggle; yet the indications were of a mind made up. His right hand involuntarily sought the pocket of his waistcoat, as if assurance of the safety of two papers was constantly to be desired. He rapped at the door, which was opened by his friend and neighbor.

"Good evening, neighbor Jones," and "Good evening, Parson Davenport," and the minister is drawn within the hospitable door, and into the private room of the master of the mansion.

"It is unnecessary to say that thy visit betokens some matter of serious import, Pastor Davenport," said his host, as he poked the crackling hickory on the wide hearth into a cheerier blaze. "Thy countenance tells it to me, now that thou makest no effort to hide that thou hast somewhat on thy mind."

"Thou speak'st truly, friend Jones," replied the minister, wearily drawing his hand across his anxious brow, as he gratefully stretched his feet to

the blaze. "I have spent some hours in earnest prayer, and then made haste to thee."

"A man has the best preparation for everything of a troublous nature when he does that," observed Mr. Jones, going into the spacious dining room for a moment, and returning with the big flip-jug. "Thee must needs take something to drive the cold out of thy bones, and to put strength into thy inner man," he said, proffering it. But the minister put it gently aside.

"I am fasting before God to know His will," he said, "and need no outward strength."

Mr. Jones sighed and set the flip-jug on the polished oaken table in the centre of the room. Then, taking another chair by the fireside, he silently surveyed his visitor, waiting for him to speak.

"I have this day received two letters," said Parson Davenport, rousing from his revery. Withdrawing the packets from the pocket of his waistcoat, he significantly tapped them as they lay in his palm with the fingers of his other hand. "I will tell thee the contents and then leave them for thee to read over by thyself. One is from Teacher Hooke."

"And the other?" cried Mr. Jones, almost in a gasp.

"From William Goffe, in Boston."

"What said he? What said they both?" cried Jones, eagerly leaning forward.

"Hush! it behooves us both to be guarded in tone and words," warned the minister, with a glance toward the door.

"There is no one in this part of the house," said his host, "and besides, the walls are thick. But as you say, we may best be careful, for the times are troublous indeed."

"The times are indeed troublous," declared Parson Davenport, heaving a sigh. Then he restrained himself, and began without more delay on the contents of the two packets. "Teacher Hooke writes me that the Act of Indemnity has been passed, promising pardon, with some exceptions, to those Judges who took part in the condemnation of King Charles the First. Among the exceptions are Generals Whalley and Goffe."

William Jones shook with ill-concealed passion, but mastered it to obtain a full report of Minister Davenport's communications.

"I am also informed through the same medium," proceeded the minister, "that information has been sent to England that these two Judges of King Charles are being harbored in our Colonies, and that orders for their immediate arrest have been issued."

"Traitors, villains!" cried Mr. Jones, unable to restrain himself, "whoever could have betrayed them!" Springing from his chair he paced restlessly up and down the room. "I must, I will

speak. Human nature cannot endure it in silence. Think of my father! Oh, my God, why this wrong!" He clenched his hands and smote the air with his fists. Parson Davenport sat silently and watched him, well knowing that in such an outburst the overcharged heart must be allowed to relieve itself in view of the frightful memories stored therein.

"For this reason, I came to thee," he said when the paroxysm had somewhat died down. "God has given it into thy hands to do service for these unhappy refugees who have dealt a blow to a tyrant's power, and thus made all men their debtors."

"And I will do that service," declared Jones, springing back to the side of the minister, and raising his hand quivering with excitement. "So help me, mighty God, to avenge my father's murder!"

"Nay, call not the God thou servest, to avenge thee; 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' saith the Lord. To thee belong acts of mercy, and to centre all thy thoughts on these hunted and suffering men."

"And those will I render," promised Jones, eagerly. "Is that all that Teacher Hooke's letter contained?" he asked, slipping into his chair again.

"Nay; but thou shalt read it at length, after-

ward. It is a long letter, and hath many things of common interest to us. The main fact to consider this night is what related to the Judges. The orders for their arrest are out, with a price on their heads; traitors are in our Colonies — God save their poor souls — who for paltry gold will betray them. And Teacher Hooke protests there is no time to lose, and beseeches me to save them."

"And we will," cried Mr. Jones, in great excitement. "And God, the God you preach and we both serve, will help us. Oh, I am not afraid," he added with intense energy.

"No, we will not fear," replied the minister, earnestly; "for He will not desert us, nor the truth, to save which tyrants are deposed. But now listen to the account of my other letter, from William Goffe."

Mr. Jones clasped his hands and held himself in check to lose not a word as Parson Davenport proceeded. "It is a manly letter wrung out of a suffering soul that yet will not despond, but sees the hand of God in everything. He puts the truth plainly. The Massachusetts Colony is embarrassed by their presence; and neither Goffe, nor Whalley, even, who is naturally by his age less inclined to move his quarters, is willing to remain there longer. Indeed, by the tone of his letter I should not think it safe to do so, although

they are retired in Cambridge and not so publicly engaged in worship, in visiting about, and in meetings for devotion. These exercises, previous tidings have announced as practically ceased. Governor Endicott is now called by this order for arrest, to active measures against them. It needs be that the Judges turn to other places and other friends who will give them help and shelter; and by Teacher Hooke's advice, they turn to me."

He put the two letters into his neighbor's hand. "Stay not to read them now," he said, "but read after I have left thee, for I have told thee the gist of the letters."

"Thou wilt reply at once?" cried Mr. Jones, eagerly, "and tell them that here in this New Haven Colony they will find true friends who will never surrender them to their enemies — no, not while life lasts."

"I shall write and tell them they will find one friend who will promise all that," replied Parson Davenport, slowly and firmly, while his keen eyes seemed to burn their way into the other's soul. "I have no authority to answer for any save myself."

"You can answer for me — William Jones; I give you full power and right to do so, and by the memory of what my father suffered on the execution block in payment for noble services such as theirs, I will help you to the best of my ability in

their aid." So cried his host through set lips and with flashing eyes.

"I need help and counsel," said Parson Davenport, the fire of gratitude and lively emotion filling his eyes and every line of his austere face. "No one can perform the task successfully single-handed. You recognize the risk, friend Jones?" he asked deliberately.

"And you?" queried the other, evading the question while he curiously regarded him.

"Oh, that does not matter — it has been well considered," replied the minister, dryly. "I see no reason to avoid the risk. I shall write, since thou dost support me by thy help and counsel, and beg them to come to my house, where I shall keep them till convinced some better place should harbor them."

For answer, Mr. Jones grasped the hand of his revered pastor, and said with streaming eyes, "The Lord deliver thee from evil, and make me His instrument to help thee."

"Let us pray," cried Parson Davenport, and, the two men falling to their knees, he sent up a petition fervent and long, for strength and wisdom to relieve the necessities of these His saints, and to rescue them from the pursuers and from all the perils that beset them. Then, without a word, he went home, to sit up by a midnight candle in his study, writing the missive to William Goffe in

Cambridge, in Massachusetts Colony, bidding him to tarry not, but to come with all due speed to him, Minister Davenport.

This letter was delivered, according to the request in the epistle it answered, by the early dawn of the morrow into the hands of the same messenger — that personage being, as we have seen, Jedediah Beetle.

VI

BEHOLD Beetle therefore raised to the dignity of a messenger, sorely put to it to know the why and wherefore, yet well pleased to find it so. No danger now of public stocks for him, or whipping-posts either; and more chicken dinners in the parsonage kitchen would be his without doubt. So his honest blue eyes, under their thickets of tawny eyebrows, beamed satisfaction on the world without, and a certain independence of gait communicated itself to his powers of locomotion, as he trudged off, the return packet in his hand, placed there with only these words from Parson Davenport, "You have your instructions where to take this?"

"Yes, Passon," Beetle had answered, pulling his forelock. He had emerged from his little cabin, evidently expecting this early morning visit, and now met the minister on the edge of the outlying forest.

"See that no delay is caused, but start at once," Parson Davenport lingered to command, then slowly turned and retraced his steps, his head bent, and hands clasped behind his back, as if already conning his Sunday sermon.

"Now blast my liver and lights!" quoth Jed, as the tall, thin form disappeared down the bridle path. "I kin 'spress myself now as I want to, I s'pose, bein' alone. Here's a mighty go for Jed Beetle! I'm to run back an' forth with papers an' sech, an' not know no more'n the dead, what's inter 'em. Well, it's all right, seein' it's Passon Davenport's concernment. G'long, Jed, an' hoof it out to that other chap lightnin' smart!"

"Jed," screamed a woman's voice, at sound of which Beetle ducked involuntarily.

"Oh, I see you," cried Goody Beetle, coming to the door of the cabin and flourishing a well-used broom at him down the bridle path; "jest you wait till I get at you! Ther ain't no wood in th' house. You lazy son of a dog!" and much more of the same sort in a torrent, ending with the exclamation that ran all through the tirade at intervals, "jest you wait till I get at you!"

"I kin wait 's well 's not," grinned Jed at her, ramming the packet well down into his ragged coat, but not until Goody Beetle had seen the movement and recognized the fact that something was in the wind. Quick as a flash, she flung down the broom, and although very stout, she waddled so effectively that she was in a trice up to her husband's side; seeing which he broke into a run.

"I'll have you yit," screamed the enraged woman, shaking both sets of grimy claws at him.

"Oh, drat ye; I'll have ye took up by the mag'strate an' whipped at th' post, an' inter the stocks, fer not workin', ye lazy hound, an' supportin' yer wife. And ye've got somethin' that don't b'long to ye, I know."

Jed's heels clicked it lively to the tune of these protests; all of which, except the last, he had heard dinged into his ears so many times that they had lost value. This concluding announcement, however, surged over him like a cold wave to a man trying to get into harbor.

"Ding it all, what eyes th' woman's got," he muttered in dismay. "All is, after I git this business over I can't go home till she's cooled off. That's easy enough to bear." He burst out into a hoarse laugh, the echo of which reached Goody Beetle, and settled her in a quick resolve.

Down the Boston Town road went Jed. Everybody whom he met greeted him kindly but carelessly, in return for the good-humored grin he sent them. No need to tell the sufferings endured by his legs, long-stiffened through a notion that exercise was unwholesome, at the unwonted exertion he was now under. In due time, remembering the minister's charge as to haste, he came, on a turn in the bridle path, face to face with the horseman who had delivered yesterday's packet to him, whose horse was now slowly bearing him back and forth while he waited.

"Well done," said the horseman, leaning from his saddle to receive the packet with alacrity; "thou art a worthy fellow to send on an errand," he added well pleased.

"An' were it not on Passon Davenport's concernments, I'd not be at thy beck an' call," said Jed, sturdily, "an' I tell thee the truth, whoever ye may be."

"I do not doubt it in the least," said the other, laughing heartily; "and although thou art not overburdened with politeness, nor overmuch beauty, I know an honest countenance when I see it; so hold thy hand: the workman is worthy of his hire; and, moreover, in these troublous times, I would not involve thee in risk without some compensation," and he tried to drop a crown piece into Jed's dirty hand.

"Gold!" exclaimed Jed; at sight of that, his blue eyes trying to o'erleap their protecting thickets. But he thrust his hand behind him.

"And why not?" rejoined the horseman, coolly. "Is not gold good enough for thee, man? What wouldst thou more?" and he bantered him, still holding out the crown piece.

"I don't take no pay fer pleasin' th' Passon," said Jed, doggedly. His mouth watered, and his light blue eyes fairly riveted themselves to the glittering gold; but his hand was not forthcoming. And he stood quite straight.

"Listen to reason," said the horseman, leaning from the saddle, "this is not Pastor Davenport's matter, but it concerns one other. If he chooses to pay for it like an honest man, thou, like another, should not refuse it. Hold forth thy hand, and be a man." A pity at the rags and the hungry lines of the countenance before him swept his face. "I tell thee, he whose errand I do, gave it me to share with such as thee; and God be thanked I fell upon thee." Jed, scarce knowing it, extended his hand, at this determination; the crown piece was dropped within it, and the horseman straightened up with a sigh of relief.

"I never had none before," said Jed, simply. Then he pinched the coin of his Majesty's realm, and applied it with the fingers and thumbs of both hands, as if afraid to lose hold of it, to his snags of yellow teeth. "That's good; I swan, I'll keep it," he declared positively, gripping it fast in his fist.

"Instead, the village tap-room will see it before night, I shrewdly suspect," said the other, good-humoredly. "Well, thou art an honest man, I feel sure of that, or thou wouldst not have earned it. Keep a tongue in thy head, and tell naught of thy meeting with me, and all will be well," and sticking spurs to his horse, he clattered off the way he came, first hearing Jed solemnly declare, "I'll never tell 's long 's I live."

"Now odds sputter fish!" cried Jed, left alone, at a loss for words strong enough, and twitching off his old cap, he scratched his tousled head violently, undoubled his fist, and then stared again and again at the gold piece. This was real evidence of the episode he had passed through. Indeed, of the two episodes; for ever since the first meeting with the strange horseman, Jed had uneasy surmises that he must have taken a cup with somebody and gone to bed drunk, to dream the errand to Parson Davenport, notwithstanding the reality of the two packets.

But the chicken dinner: that was substantial and sure proof, and now here was the gold piece. Again Jed bit it and pinched it, and stooped down to ring its edge upon a stone. And with a grunt of delight that it was *bona fide* gold, he hid it beneath his ragged waistcoat, little dreaming the dire calamity which that same bit of money should bring him.

Meantime the solitary horseman put spurs to his beast and galloped out of town. But although the superscription of the packet in his charge was addressed not to Hartford, Connecticut, but to Boston Town, Colony of Massachusetts, the stranger thought proper to hie him without delay to the former place, and to the residence of no less a personage than Governor Winthrop.

"For reasons best known to me, Generals Whal-

ley and Goffe removed to-day to the outermost part of the village," said Governor Winthrop, giving him audience in his private room. "There thou wilt find them, as made plain by this paper," a tracing which he handed to the messenger, "if thou hast aught to communicate to them, Mr. Lobden. But stay," — the Governor passed into his dining room, returning with a decanter and two glasses, — "thou hast the appearance of a long journey hanging about thee, and doubtless canst dispose of a few swallows to reënforce thee." Saying this, he poured out a generous portion of wine.

"Thanks no, your Excellency," refused Mr. Lobden, yet with longing looks at the glass. "I must not stop even for an instant; and I know myself so well, that were I to drink but the half of that, I should well-nigh forget my errand."

"I will not detain thee," said Governor Winthrop, quickly putting aside the glass on the table. "And verily I could but wish that more like thee would find their way to our Colony: there will be plenty of service for men of thy stamp, I can tell thee, Mr. Lobden."

"Your Excellency, I shall serve the Colony to the best of my poor ability," declared Lobden. "And now begging to be excused, I go to finish my errand; for find General Goffe I must without delay."

Governor Winthrop fidgeted about among the

papers on his table without speaking; then cleared his throat with a hasty, "Ahem"; Lobden, on the point of going out, turned back involuntarily.

"It will probably occur to you that the future holds somewhat of danger to the generals but recently come to us from Boston Town," he said, with an effort to be unconcerned.

"Yes," said Lobden, stoutly.

"And so, on those who do succor and uphold them, will possibly, nay probably, descend punishment from the English Crown." This last was brought out in a low voice, every syllable carefully enunciated.

"Of a truth," assented Lobden, without stirring.

"And you have a wife and family to consider?" The Governor eyed the man keenly.

"That's so," replied Lobden. Then he added, "Wife and family is one thing; the Colony is another; and if I desert that, I'd have no right to protect them inside its borders: that's the way I look at it."

"And to desert the stranger and foreigner within our gates is a breach of hospitality you and I would be guiltless of. Is not that so, Mr. Lobden?" There was a light in his eyes, and he held out his hand to the other.

"Indeed, your Excellency, it is," replied Mr. Lobden, holding back from the hand as a condescension not dreamed of.

But Governor Winthrop still extended it, and at last, as it was grasped, shook the palm kindly and bade him God-speed, reiterating the directions whereby General Goffe could be found.

And by nightfall the two generals, with their guide by the name of Lobden, were well under way to the New Haven Colony, in response to Pastor Davenport's "Come to me."

There were little puffs of smoke rising one by one from the "Sabba-day housen" on the meeting-house green; and groups every now and then were arriving, of those who rode or walked from a distance to the services. Friends separated for the week, at the ends of the settlement, only allowed the short, crisp "Good morrow" or "How bides it with thee?" leaving all longer communications till the welcome hour of noon, when the luncheon might be eaten, and the half-frozen bodies thawed out by the grateful firesides.

Goody Beetle screamed, "Ho, Jed, where be ye?" to her spouse undergoing the Sabbath-day cleaning over a big tub in the woodshed which he religiously imposed upon himself to last him through the week. For to neglect this and the induction of his figure into his best clothes would have been nearly as great a sin as to absent himself from the house of God. That, he never dreamed of doing. Nor did he wish to miss one of those services, for at its close he took in more filling news than a whole week of

six secular days could possibly yield to him. So now on his wife's sharp warning that he would be late, for the second drum had beaten, and thus he would be cried out in meeting, with herself as well, he whipped up in his preparations, and the two soon bent their steps to the spot whither all the townspeople were wending, while the patrol guard watched the houses left vacant, that divine worship might lack no attendance.

Jed hugged himself solemnly under his Sabbaday waistcoat, and passed his hand with delighted commendation over the tangled locks shining with bear's grease and soap under his peaked hat. "Here's a brain for ye," he was saying to himself. "Th' old Scratch" (his affectionate name for his wife, given for reasons best known to himself) "can't find where I've put that ere gold piece, not ef she'd got eyes in the back of her head, which I mostly believe she has. Beats all, though, how she's toned down; shouldn't think 'twas the same woman," and he glanced askance at his spouse waddling by his side, while a remorseful pang smote him, and he mentally vowed to look after the woodpile on the morrow, and to snare a rabbit or two, and some birds, to bring to her. And perhaps — and here his imagination took the liveliest rein — he would even set to work to get the ground ready for planting, as he squinted knowingly up at the March sky. "Guess it's goin' ter be an 'arly spring," he remarked.

But Goody Beetle had plans of her own under her brown hood, and talking wasn't one of them; so she only grunted out a "maybe" and waddled on. To-day she would not look (for was it not the Lord's day till sundown) for the contents of Jed's old waistcoat, which he had left in no spot that her keen eyes, despite her rummaging, could detect. But the moment the shadows of twilight falling across the open space in front of her cabin door reached the stout stake she had thrust in the houseplace to determine this particular moment, wouldn't she bestir herself! Oh, wouldn't she! And so she hugged herself under her thick woollen cloak, just as jubilant as was Jed over possession of brain power. In fact, there were no two persons attending divine service that morning in the meeting-house on the green quite so happy as the Beetles, husband and wife, who separated on reaching the door, and went, each to his and to her place, as befitted their rank and sex.

The meeting-house was so called, because in it were also held the sessions of the General Court; for it was not built for church purposes exclusively: affairs of state being as sacred in the eyes of the colonists as were those purely religious. This structure in New Haven Town was, as we have seen, fifty feet square with a tower and a turret. It was on the market-place and near to its centre. Within, the space behind the pulpit was reserved

for the teaching elders; directly in the front sat the ruling elder, and just before him was set apart the seat for the deacons. This seat had a shelf which usually depended from its hinges, but could be spread and used for the communion table. So much for the positions of the dignitaries of the church.

Down in the body of the meeting-house the worshippers were divided according to sex: the men sat on one side of the "forms," or seats, and the women on the other, divided by the middle aisle, or "alley," with this exception, — that one-half of the soldiers were seated on the women's side of the house. There was a further division of seats; and this naturally was according to rank in the Colony, the chief dignitaries or their wives and daughters securing the highest seats in the sanctuary.

On Sabbath days, instead of the use of a bell to call the people to worship, a drum was beaten twice in the turret and up and down the chief streets to announce the hour when the service in the meeting-house should begin. When all was ready, an armed soldier stood on guard above, and men with muskets were ranged in certain places within.

The Rev. John Davenport in gown and bands, such as he had worn in England, paced decorously on this Sabbath along the private path-

way made from the meeting-house to his parsonage, and acknowledging the obeisance of the worshippers who all arose and stood in their places, he solemnly made his way up the "middle alley" to the pulpit. His face was illumined with unusual peace, and dominated by such a determination of purpose, that involuntarily his people watched closely for special effort in the line of sermonizing. Nor were they to be disappointed.

In ringing utterances that left not the smallest chance of being misunderstood, he delivered for an hour and a half a discourse based upon Isaiah xvi. 3, 4. "Take counsel, execute judgment, make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcast; bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler."

His face shone above his awe-struck parishioners as he held forth on the grace and duty of hospitality to any stranger within their gates, bringing home the application to each soul as being the positive command of God, disobedience of which no man could hope to commit and live.

Eternity, with its ingulfing ruin and despair, and endless suffering in the lake of fire and brimstone, stood out in fearful imagery before them all, sending the chills down already half-frozen vertebræ, and making the matrons huddle up

within their cloaks to keep warm, while the children rolled their poor eyes in fear; and even strong men, braving all sorts of physical dangers in this life in the new wilderness, felt cold to the marrow in the contemplation of the denunciations hurled forth from the sacred desk on any offender against the colonial ideas of God and His methods of ruling His universe.

The hour-glass had been turned with no sign of diminution in interest, and the seventeenthly had been reached, when suddenly the minister closed the sacred book with a force that made the children start, and the long sermon was at an end.

"A powerful discourse," was the universal verdict, as the worshippers filed out decorously to the Sabba-day housen, scattered on the meeting-house green, and their own especial groups. "The parson grows more spiritual every Lord's day," said one woman, while slicing up the cold meat, heaving a sigh for her unregenerate children who hadn't yet made a profession. "How thou canst hold out against the Lord's anointed, and stiffen the necks of thy rebellion, I do not see," with a reproachful glance at the son and daughter waiting for the meat slices that they might seize some to put with their bread and run across the Green to the Sabba'-day house of Farmer Richard Sperry.

There were two minds in the young man and

his sister, to urge to this course. Sylvy Bunce knew that this particular Sabba-day house always held Will Hepburn between services; and Mark Bunce felt in his inmost soul that it was full time for the pretty niece of Farmer Sperry, who lived with them, but had been visiting in New Amsterdam, to return. And as he would have gone miles to achieve that object, he was now all in a flutter to get at the statement as to when she would come home.

"There's a ter'ble retribution for sinners," said Goody Beetle, grimly doling out the cold potatoes and brown bread to Jed on pins and needles to get it and hie away to the men of his set. "There'll be a lot of wailin' an' gnashin' of teeth, I kin tell you," with a significant look at her spouse, who seized the cold victuals and fled precipitately, not to be seen again by her till across the meeting-house he sat at the lengthy afternoon service.

There was a weighty sense of responsibility settling down upon the hearers of the morning sermon, as they sat about their firesides; or those more hardened to the cold wandered solemnly about the Green discussing it. It was as though an injunction born out of the minister's premonition that it was soon to be needed by his people, had made him open his heart to them and cry the lesson he had learned of God, and must now from his soul deliver to them. And discuss it as they

would, in all its aspects, this was what came home to all, that for some special reason Parson Davenport had warned them of their duty to any stranger, or one in need, who should appeal to them for aid.

"How good is our pastor," quoth Farmer Sperry, throwing on another stick of hickory to the blazing fire, as he came in from the inner part of his Sabba-day house, where he had seen the horses comfortable against the warm chimney. "Verily, it behooves us to put our hand out to the suffering and needy stranger, whoever he may be, when he, our spiritual leader, points the way so clearly."

"I really believe Parson Davenport would harbor those dreadful Regicides," said Sylvy Bunce, drawing near with her cold meat and bread slices to the warm corner nearest to young Hepburn, and gurgling as she spoke. Will Hepburn turned his eyes full upon her. "And why not?" he asked, letting the morsel of food he was carrying to his mouth pause mid-air.

"Oh, nothing — only — "

"And never speak of them, Sylvy, as Regicides," went on Will, sternly. "Remember they are the Judges of Charles the First."

"And I say why not also to you, Sylvy?" Farmer Sperry took up the query. His wife shot him an anxious glance, then said, "Well, thank God,

they are not here, but in the Massachusetts Colony, and pray Heaven they will not come here, at least to tarry, if they must pass through."

"Never mind about them," struck in Mark Bunce; "when is Marcia coming home?" he managed to ask, though the name stuck in his throat, and his cheek turned red as a girl's.

Sylvy, who had shrunk back in silence at the rebuff she had received, now tossed her head at this question, and pricked up one pretty ear for the answer.

Mrs. Sperry answered thus, "I do not know, for her uncle has writ her not to vex herself about it, but to take her time."

"I do not wish to hasten the child's home-coming until she is ready," said Farmer Sperry, to whom the nineteen-year-old maiden, the daughter of his brother John dead in Old England, was as dear as if she were his own offspring. "She has never had such a treat, and mayhap never will again, as this visit to her mother's kin will give her. And yet my eyes long for her."

The eyes of the two young men in the group seemed to be affected in the same way, and the silence was only broken by Mrs. Sperry.

"But Marcia knows how I require her presence," she said, with that intonation that betokens the indulged person who sees in delicate health a sure path to sympathy. "My strength is put

to it sorely every day, and still she lingers," she added querulously.

"Marcia will be able to help all the more when she does get home," said Farmer Sperry, in the tone of a man accustomed to make the best of everything, and going to the door he scanned the clouds and made some observation on the prospects for the morrow.

"How long really will Marcia be away, think you?" asked Sylvy, leaning confidentially toward Will Hepburn. Mark Bunce crunched his dry bread stolidly, but let no word of the reply fail him.

"Some weeks yet, I should suppose," said Will, gloomily, "it costs too much for such a journey to take it lightly, and Marcia does right to get all the good out of it she can;" but he sighed.

"Of course," said Sylvy, with a toss of the curls within her hood-depth. Yet the smile on her face was not a pleasant one as she realized that the time, long as it seemed to others, was very short to one who essayed to win Marcia's sweetheart, albeit Farmer Sperry's niece had never committed herself by word or deed, to the openly acknowledged devotion of her swain. And she remembered that as Will Hepburn said the Regicides must be called the Judges, henceforth that was her duty to observe it with all due deference to their cause.

VII

THAT night the Rev. John Davenport tossed on an unquiet couch. He had delivered his message; would his people heed it? Allowing for all possible detentions, the advent of the Judges into New Haven Town would shortly take place; and although the immediate danger to the townspeople for harboring them was not great, for the "hue and cry" for their arrest had been carried along through Barbados and was still on its way, yet the minister knew that in the weeks to come the New Haven Colony, with the refugees in its midst, would be constantly menaced with an ever increasing watchfulness, on the part of the Tory or Loyalist element, that would single it out for the notice of a revengeful king. For himself, and his own danger, he gave not a thought. He had counted the cost; and on his knees before his God had devoted himself to the safety of these two men who, he firmly believed, were apostles of liberty, to be hounded and run to earth, unless some one stepped in to save. And he proposed to be that one.

One other member of his parish had also sleep-

less thoughts, for her fingers itched to be at the hiding-place where she had tracked her spouse and watched him conceal the old waistcoat. Alas! she had unsuccessfully endeavored to elude his vigilance at the welcome approach of the Sabbath twilight. For Jed took it into his head to stay at home and expound his beliefs as coinciding with those of Parson Davenport delivered that day from the sacred desk, and as he was fond of hearing his own voice, he exhorted long and loudly, until the frantic woman, her eyelids dropping from sheer weariness, besought him in no gentle terms to shut his tongue, and go to bed. But Jed, elated with his stream of eloquence, talked on and on to himself and the black cat, as they both hugged the fireside. At last he fell asleep in his chair.

At earliest cock crow Goody Beetle, emerging from the bedroom, found him so. "A good time now," she cried, her black eyes snapping with spite at his long figure crouching in the old chair. "An' if he catches me away, I can say I have been picking up sticks." So she hurried softly out, and shut the door gently behind her.

With joints stiff and feverish from loss of sleep, she waddled over the ground as best she might, arriving presently at a secluded spot within the wood, which might well bear out Jed's confidence in it. "But he can't get away from me," mumbled Goody to herself. "Oh, no, he can't, he might 'a' known

I'd track him," and prostrating herself on the ground, she grubbed with might and main into the depths of the jungle of undergrowth at the base of one of the huge forest trees, sniffing the ground occasionally. "Seems as if I could smell his weskit," she said to herself; for in her glee at discovering his secret so easily, she allowed herself to laugh and talk to herself; pausing now and then, as she rooted up the mould with her long and dirty nails more like to talons, accompanying the task with smothered implications on her spouse for hiding it so deep. Digging thus, with her coarse black hair streaked with gray fallen over her shoulders, and her toothless gums parted while she chattered to herself, she was suddenly aware of a heavy hand on her shoulder, and a voice thundered in her ear: "Woman, what are you doing? What unholy task is thine?"

Tumbling over the pile of mould and dry leaves that attested her labor, Goody Beetle screamed first, throwing up her grubby hands; then, in anger more than in fright, she demanded to know why a poor body was disturbed who "wasn't a-harmin' anybody, only gatherin' up a few sticks to make the kettle boil."

Something soft rubbed against her, and she looked down a minute to see the black cat fumbling her gown.

"Drat you!" she cried, too incensed to mind at

whom she scolded; but the cat, as if well accustomed to elude such attentions, sprang composedly to a neighboring tree and sat there to view the proceedings.

"You seem not to have gathered many sticks," observed the interrupter of her peace. Indeed, there were two of them, although Goody had not before observed the other as the speaker pointed significantly to the pile of dirt and leaves.

Goody gnashed her gums in speechless rage, while her eyes flashed volumes. And she set all her wits busily at work to get the men away, even though she went with them, if they only left the secret undiscovered. How glad she was that she had not sooner dragged out the old waistcoat to the light.

"Good sirs," at length she said in a wheedling tone, "I pray you to leave a poor body. Stay, I will go with you," as she saw a derisive smile flit over the face of the man who still had his hand on her shoulder.

"It would ill become me to desert a place that shows such industry as thine," and he dropped to his knee. "Come, comrade, this may yield us somewhat for our pains."

In vain did Goody beseech and weep, imploring God to wreak confusion on their heads. The two strangers heeded this no more than the cry of the startled cat above them, which added its howls

to that of its mistress. "Jed — oh, Jed," she shrieked. "If he will only come, though I lose whatever it is he hid, I care not," she thought in anguish. Unable to restrain herself further, she sprang to her feet, suddenly fell upon the unguarded digger now reënforced by his companion, and with nails more resembling claws than the trimmings of the human hand, disclosed her right to her husband's particular name by which he designated her.

"Now by all that's most holy," yelled the man, taken unawares, and squirming in the pile of earth and leaves, pursued by Goody's relentless claws, that marked his face like the tracks of a strange bird. "Fury of a woman, desist, or I'll kill you!"

"Would you so?" screeched Goody, beside herself in rage. Being now quite in her element, she fought and scratched like a tiger, bitterly lamenting her loss of teeth; until it took all the united efforts of the two men to subdue her.

"By my soul, Dick, but your countenance lacketh beauty to such a degree that it is a most unholy sight," exclaimed the other man, when the combat was ended only by skilfully tripping Goody up. She fell to the ground, where she lay snorting with passion.

"Tie the virago to a tree," commanded Dick, his face streaming with blood.

"Indeed, sooner said than done," cried the other

with a short laugh. "I wouldn't have my face marked by those poisoned claws for all the treasures of this beastly colony of traitors. Tie her yourself," he advised.

"Wait till I can see," said Dick. "And the knots shall go in strong, I can promise you." He drew out his handkerchief and sopped his lacerated face, yet the red stream jumped forth from a score of little rivers dug in by the angry claws. "Now then," when the flow was somewhat abated, "up you come, old shrew; and here you go." With a dexterous twitch in which his comrade willingly assisted, Goody, grievously shocked in every bone, was set on her feet, and dragged to the nearest big tree, to which, as had been promised by Dick, she was fastened by many knots tied in anything but the gentlest fashion, till she foamed at the mouth, unable to utter a word.

"Give but one peep, my bird with the gentle claws," said Dick, wiping his countenance again with the handkerchief, now nearly as red as his streaming wounds, "and you shall have a taste of cold lead," and he exhibited just the merest hint of a horse pistol beneath his coat.

It took but a few moments to clear the hole, where Goody had made such a fine beginning, of useless dirt, to drag forth the old waistcoat, and to hold up between thumb and finger the crown piece. When Goody saw that, so much beyond

her wildest imaginings, she thought she should die, and cursed herself for a fool to let this fortune thus slip through Jed's and her fingers by her cupidity. "Oh, do not rob a poor woman," she screamed, forgetting the horse pistol; "I'm dying, good sirs."

"Say your prayers then," said Dick, roughly. "You need no gold where you're going," added the other with a laugh, as the old waistcoat was turned inside out and ripped apart in the search for more treasure. With an oath apiece at finding none, they flung the waistcoat in her face, and telling her that some one would doubtless search for such an attractive specimen of womankind, and thus come to her release, they carelessly strode off. A second thought struck them on their way, and they determined to send the clutch of the law to the angry and baffled woman tied to the big forest tree.

"And kick up all the rumpus that we can in this beggarly old Colony of psalm-singers," cried one.

"And get even with the old hag for my face," yelled Dick. "Ha! that's a good one!" He slapped his thigh, and ran down the road followed by his companion, to the market-place of the town.

About two hours later a resounding summons was pounded on the door of the little cabin that the Beetles called home. Jed rubbed his eyes with a sleepy hand, pulled himself straight in his old chair,

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and met the second knock, with a "Oh, haow do ye do, Mr. Kimberly, won't you come in and set down."

"Where's your wife?" demanded the uncompromising voice of the town constable, glancing about the kitchen sharply as though for the figure of Goody, who could never be overlooked on the score of being diminutive.

"I d' no," said Jed, in a stupid way. His eloquence and powers of exhortation had served him a poor turn, as he stood there heavy and loutish with sleep.

"Are you sure you don't know where your wife is?" cried the man of law, harshly.

"No, I don't," grinned Jed, foolishly. "Ye needn't call her, I ain't never particular about seein' her, bein's I ain't lonely."

"You better come along with me," said the constable, to end the farce speedily. "To tell you in a few words, Jed, your wife is in the public stocks, and like to go to gaol afterward for stealing a crown piece, and you are more 'n likely to be accessory to it, which is what the law of the Colony is going to find out."

At the words "a crown piece" Jed gave a loud cry, and clapped his hands to his head. "Oh, my Lord!" he screamed, "I thought I"—then he pulled himself up and faced the constable.

"Come along!" and hauled off by that func-

tionary, Beetle soon joined his unfortunate wife who, spent with rage, could only mouth at him while he also was fastened in the public stocks, the crowd that soon collected whispering about the dreadful words "gaol" and "scaffold," "thief" and "witch," as they cast glances of scorn and contumely at Goody, whose reputation as a village scold had earned them for her. The harsh gazes were mitigated as they rested on the miserable Jedediah, who, despite all his faults (and they were many in the eyes of New England thrift and industry that could ill brook a man who lacked such qualities as did Beetle), had never been brought to the detestation of the townspeople. And now his tousled head sank low on his breast, the grin all gone; and in its stead a look of such utter wretchedness as appealed to the passer-by who stopped to stare. Goody soon found her tongue and blazed away alternately at him, and the crowd fast augmenting below.

"Oh, for a wretch that steals money an' then gits it on his poor unfort'nate wife. Oh, woe is me! Drat you, if I could but get at you!" this with a furious scowl at him. Every word that she uttered told against the man whose head sank lower and lower upon his breast, with never a word from his lips.

"I didn't s'pose anything could stop Beetle's mouth," said one citizen, turning away from the painful sight.

"And it's a strange thing to think of his being a thief," said his townsman, to whom the remark was addressed. "Lazy as a dog he is, to be sure, an' Goody, bless my soul, hear the woman rave! But I can't believe that he stole a crown piece."

"Yet the strangers assert positively that they surprised Goody in the wood this morning at dawn, digging up her husband's old waistcoat where he had buried it, and the crown piece was found within the pocket."

"It looks bad," said the other, with a sympathetic glance backward at Jedediah; "but I can't believe it even now. And how, pray tell, could the strangers recognize this particular piece of gold?"

"Oh, by a private mark," they said; "and besides, if Jed didn't steal it from them, where did he get it? Gold pieces and Beetle don't harmonize well," and he laughed at the idea.

"To be sure, to be sure," assented his companion. Then he began to talk of matters pertaining to the Colony, and straightway forgot poor Jed with his feet in the public stocks and his humiliation and his shame.

VIII

"NOW by my soul," blustered the principal figure in the tap-room of the tavern at the southeast corner of the market-place, — well pleased at the attention he received, and marching up with a lordly air, to call for flip for himself and companion,—"little did I think that stepping into New Haven Colony I should be robbed at the outset. Blast the Colonies, say I, and death and confusion to them!"

"Say not so," interposed a citizen, his thin, quiet face working fearfully. It was an effort for him to speak, and he looked around the tap-room for some one to take up the cause, and to espouse the fair name of their Colony. But silence reigned. Seeing this, the blusterer turned on him a fierce mustachioed countenance: "Hey, what say you, fellow," and he caught a coin from his pocket and dashed it on the bar. "Do you know who I am, sirrah?"

The landlord of the inn gave a glance at the piece of money, then his hand closed upon it quickly and he slipped it into his pocket and dealt

out the change required from the price of the flip.

"No, I don't," replied the one addressed. He still looked anxiously around for support, not so much for himself as for his beloved Colony.

"Blast my toplights, for the white-livered set that you are!" roared the stranger, tossing down his flip at one gulp; "the whole of your dirty Colony isn't worth a stiver nor the words I waste on it, and now that King Charles the Second has come to his own, it will soon be around your ears in a rotten heap, mark you"—bringing all up in a brace of oaths. "Come, do you want to fight on it?" And he bared his brawny arms, and shook a pair of fists in the townsman's face.

"No, no," said the colonist, retreating in what might be taken for terror. "I am not a man of blood, and—"

"Ha! ha!" cried the bully, slapping the bar with one fist, till the decanters and glasses rang, "and I believe you. There isn't a mother's son among you here who would speak up now for the Colonies. I don't blame you; for you know they hold a rotten set of rebellious subjects who work mischief among you, and—"

"I beg your pardon for interrupting your fine speech, sir," said a cold, quiet voice. A figure passing by the tavern-door had paused and stood there the past few moments. The newcomer now

made his way well within the group, till he was fairly in front of the loquacious bully. "But as no other gentleman appears in haste to answer your rude and false statements, I should be extremely glad to do what I can to afford you that pleasure."

"Do you know who I am, sirrah?" roared the bully at him, furious at the interruption and reënforced by the flip he had swallowed.

"In truth, I am glad to say that I do not," replied the newcomer, with a good look at the countenance before him, that instinctively dropped its eyes at sight of the piercing black ones gazing into them.

"Well, I am Captain Breedon," announced the other, recovering his bluster, and sweeping the room with a glance to see the effect on the rapidly increasing number of listeners. "I've sailed the seas over more times than you bumpkins can count on your dirty fingers, and I am just fresh from his Majesty's counsels, in which I stand high."

"Captain Breedon you may be," said the other, carelessly, "I know not, nor care; but I declare to your face, which, allow me to say, is by no means prepossessing, that I like not your statements; nor do I believe for one instant that you or your companion was ever robbed in this or in any other of the Colonies, settled and sustained by God-fearing men."

The captain ripped out some oaths that look not well on paper, while his face grew a lively purple.

"And as you expressed a desire to test the brawn of a believer in the Colonies, perhaps you will do me the honor to give me the privilege of knocking you down," — all this in the quietest of voices; one would have thought it an invitation of the pleasantest sort, and the stranger laid down his peaked hat on the table, and rolled up his sleeves.

"Odds splutter bodkins," roared the captain; yet he moved not a muscle.

"There appears to be dulness of comprehension on thy part," observed the stranger, after waiting a moment. "Canst thou understand that I have accepted thy challenge in order to punish thee for thine insult to the Colonies? Art thou ready? Protect thyself, for I shall certainly strike" — he thundered this last, and his broad athletic figure squared instantly; his fists were hard as iron now, and his piercing eyes fairly blazed. Truly, he presented a terrible spectacle.

Instantly the tap-room was in an uproar.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, do not quarrel," begged the landlord, in a conciliatory tone. As long as the captain had gold pieces like the one mine host had just pocketed, he must be allowed to spend them pleasantly in the tap-room without molestation.

"I would beg thee, mine host, to keep to thy

glasses and bottles where thou best belongest," retorted the stranger, with one glance of his sharp black eyes in the landlord's direction, — whereat that worthy functionary ducked behind the bar to attend to matters presumably of importance, considering his haste, — "and leave me to deal with this fellow who has insulted every colonist, and dragged the fair name of this town in the mire. Now come on," he turned with a contemptuous glance to the captain again.

Captain Breedon pushed his companion forward through the knot of excited on-lookers, whose faces reflected various degrees of anger and curiosity. "And here is Colonel Crowne," he cried loudly, but his bluster had died in his throat. "He, also, is in the Colonies," he added in a manner intended to be very impressive, "on business for his Majesty, King Charles the Second."

It had its effect. There was by this time assembled the usual variety of visitors that a tavern brings forth, added to those whom the charms of the tap-room draw in. In the disturbed state of the Colonies, struggling not only to find their liberty and their rights, but to discover the best men to assist such acquisition, there were sure to be many hindrances to this development, in the shape of royalists, who remained in the Colonies as part of its life and system, while still shouting loudly for King Charles and his Parliament, and

all the injustice that he and his royal advisers might see fit to inflict. There were adventurers of all sorts, too, called hither by fabulous tales of the wealth found by the colonists, who came like birds of prey scenting their victims from afar. There were all sorts and conditions of men, who as traders or what not, were drifting through this new country and handicapping the colonial life seriously, in its progress toward good government.

So it must of necessity be that certain sympathizers in Captain Breedon's remarks now pushed forward, eager to announce themselves as on the side of a personage so favored with the royal patronage, whom it might be well for them to know and to sustain.

"You're right," cried one Scranton, slapping his thigh, and advancing to the two strangers to extend his hand. "I'll say further: I wish there were more men in this Colony," he scornfully glanced at the doughty figure with bare arms quietly awaiting the acceptance of his invitation to the hesitating captain "who would be what they pretend, loyal to our gracious Majesty."

"You ain't worth a tinker's whistle to talk to, or to fight, Dennis Scranton," cried the town blacksmith, with evident relish at being able on this occasion to bear witness; "that we all know, so you better keep out of this, I'd advise ye,"

while the bare-armed stranger so patiently waiting, composedly added: "And as nobody called on you to interfere, I will thank you to be quiet and to allow this brave gentleman from over the sea, who has held such familiar audience with the King, to put in a word on his own behalf. Will you come on?" he thundered again.

"I will have nothing to do with you," yelled Captain Breedon, with the rankest of oaths, "you low-lived, dirty bumpkin, and your puritanical Colonies are dirtier yet." And suddenly, encouraged by a wink from Scranton, he charged on the stranger like an angry bull, to be knocked flat, end over end, beyond a table covered with glasses.

The tap-room was now in a bad state. Some were for running for the guard; the landlord wrung his hands and anathematized loyalists and patriots in the same breath, while the staid citizens gathered around the bare-armed man imploring him to get out of the tavern before further contention could take place. Scranton and fellows of his ilk, together with Colonel Crowne, who all this time had not spoken, dragged out the blatant captain, crestfallen and bloody, where his countenance had come in contact with the broken glass. The bare-armed stranger, unruffled and smiling contemptuously, said as they went out: "Just as might have been expected. That fellow and such as he are cowards as well as bullies. Would

God the Colonies were rid of them," he added with a sigh.

"And now, whoever thou mayest be," exclaimed the landlord, in exasperation, "I'd thank thee to be out o' here; after kicking up such a rout an' drivin' away good customers, it looks better for thee to make thyself scarce in these parts."

"Thy perturbation is natural, mine host," replied the stranger, without irritation. "And as I should be sorry to cause loss to thy business without making amends, if these gentlemen," — looking around on the crowd, — "will do me the honor to drink at my expense," — he tossed down on the tap-room bar a gold piece from a well-filled leathern wallet, — "why I shall be only too glad to join them."

Boniface, seeing the quality of the piece tossed across the bar, and noting, with a keen eye to future business, the wallet that apparently held many more to match, smiled affably, and in a mollified tone agreed that the visitor, whose summary departure had just taken place, was indeed a dirty, scurvy sort of a person, who, he was glad for the honor of his house, would probably show his face there no more.

"I agree with thee," observed the stranger, lightly. "And now that there seems to be no special cause for me to remain, other than for a friendly reason, I propose the health of the Colonies — and here's to them; and may God bless

them and lead them to liberty every one," he added solemnly.

He raised his glass of flip high over his head, as he brought out the toast in clear resonant tones, in which there was so much infectious fervor that not a man failed to respond, although before his entrance the loyalty of some had been at a pretty low ebb. The stranger bowed, a winning smile overspreading his countenance. "Thank ye, gentlemen," he said, "the honor and success of the Colonies is secure in such hands as yours." And he seized his peaked hat from the table and departed, his muscular figure erect, as with dignified mien he passed out.

"That's as noble a head and shoulders as I've seen in many a day," said a townsman, breaking the silence as he sipped his flip.

"An' as free handed," remarked mine host, balancing the gold coin on his finger, before consigning it to his pocket, where it clinked company with the crown piece. "I wish men like him would come along oftener. Dost any of ye know his whereabouts?"

"Certes, I do," piped out a lesser individual on the fringe of the company thus treated. Being pushed forward for his tale, he related with much stammering, and hemming and hawing, that that very day he had seen the stranger, who so boldly espoused the cause of the Colonies, entering the

house of no less a person than the Rev. John Davenport.

"Did you so?" cried the landlord, his hopes of frequent visits from the stranger considerably abated. "Well, well, he is a person of distinction at all events" — trying to cover up his disappointment as best he could.

"An' that is true," assented the entire company, out of throats still wet with the stranger's treat.

And at this moment, in an upper chamber of the parsonage, behind drawn curtains, the minister sat by a bed in the corner holding the hand of a man with the snow of age on his hair, and the pallor of fatigue on his cheek.

"Here thou wilt rest," said Parson Davenport, gently pressing the palm he held. "Do not try to talk now, General Whalley. We shall have many days, please God, of quiet in which we can recount all that our hearts are longing to hear." The door opened, and the stranger, who had championed the Colonies in the tap-room, entered. The glow of that encounter in which he had silenced the braggadocio so mischievous in the new settlement was yet on his countenance, and the mirth that flashed from his eye at the hasty departure of the bully and his confrères beamed from its piercing black depths.

"Of a truth," said General Whalley, lifting his head from the pillow in astonishment, "I have not

seen merriment in thine eye for this long time, William. It reminds me of olden days," and he sank back again feebly.

"And it may be an augury for the future," responded the other almost gayly. "Who can say, since all tyrants are bullies, and need but to be matched with the absolute fearlessness of a just cause."

General Whalley uttered a long sigh, and folded his hands on his poor tired breast as he closed his eyes.

"Sit you here, General Goffe," begged Parson Davenport, when the newcomer had described the scene enacted at the tavern, "and now recount, if you will, the affairs leading up to thy journey."

"And why I followed my letter so soon? Thou hast a right to know," said General Goffe, accepting, with an easy grace, the offered seat. "I will tell thee without preamble. Although the people of Boston Town had many of them been most kind to us, and our stay at Cambridge was agreeable in the extreme, thou canst not deny that matters were becoming critical for us and our friends in the Massachusetts Colony. Traitors, I know not who they were, had informed the mother country of our stay there, and Governor Endicott was embarrassed by our further delay in the Colony. Before the Convention of Assistants which he was obliged to call could come to an agreement as to

what course to pursue in regard to sheltering us longer, we solved the question ourselves on February 26th by quietly coming away."

"The next thing to be done," continued the general, "was to reach the Connecticut Colony, and the Colony at New Haven; for with you, sir," —and he turned an affectionate glance at the spiritual face lighted up with the fire of patriotic fervor, —"we should be safe indeed, and sheltered as never man has been before, by the loftiest aims and purposes of your pure and disinterested public life."

Parson Davenport bowed, deeply affected. "My life is nearly spent," he murmured; "but may God spare it to do good service to this Colony and to all His saints, who come to it, as do you, and our dear and aged friend" —he glanced at the tall figure succumbed in weariness on the bed. "But why did you bid me in your letter to address it to Boston Town?" queried the minister, with a puzzled air.

"Simply for the reason that we were not sure, when we started, that we should tarry at Hartford; it might not be convenient for Governor Winthrop and the Colony to keep us."

"Ah! you know not Governor Winthrop, to speak thus," exclaimed Parson Davenport, in agitation; "a more devoted patriot never lived. And thou forgettest how his sympathies would be with

thee through kinship with Chaplain Hugh Peters, whose stepdaughter married Governor Winthrop's son. And all that righteous man, Hugh Peters, suffered, and his cruel death, would but serve as bonds between thee."

"True, true," said General Goffe, thoughtfully, "I assent to what thou sayest, and we found him all that could be desired in the few days we passed in that Colony," he added warmly; "yet we knew him not as we knew thee, dear friend. Verily, through our kinsman Hooke, we had learned to love thee before ever embarking for this country."

Again the expression of emotion swept over the minister's mobile countenance, and he put up his hand and brushed away a tear that trickled down his thin cheek.

"And again, we knew not but that we should hamper thy relations with Governor Winthrop, didst thou know us to be temporarily sojourning there. It was to save thee that I withheld that fact. In any case, thy missive would come to us safely. John Lobden is as good as gold, and loyal to the core."

"Why did he choose the bearer by whom the packet was delivered to me, and by whose hand it was to be returned to thy messenger?" demanded Parson Davenport, suddenly.

"John Lobden, beside being as good as gold, has one other capacity," answered General Goffe, dryly.

"He has an instinct to discover all other honest men, so I trusted him; that's all I know about it."

"And he did well," assented the minister, heartily. "Jedediah Beetle has his faults, and may lack many qualities which the world calls necessary for the successful man; but it is not the virtue of honesty. I'd trust him with all I own."

At this moment Jedediah Beetle, his head upon his breast, was cooling his heels, fast in the public stocks on the market-place.

IX

WHEN the news reached the minister's ears that Jedediah Beetle was in the public stocks, his indignation knew no bounds, and he sallied forth to the spot.

"Jedediah, what means this?" he inquired in tones of sorrow.

Beetle raised not his head, but let it sink lower yet in shame and distress; and never a word could be gotten from him.

"Now hast thou not the soul of a man," at last exclaimed the minister, in despair, and no little irritation, "to let me hamper thee with questions and thou find not thy tongue. Canst thou not understand me when I tell thee I do not believe this foul story about thee?"

"Thou hast not said it till now, Passon," came in muffled tones, as Jedediah raised his face; a pitiable spectacle it was, all tear-grimed and furrowed from ancient attacks of his wife's fingers. "Bless thee for those words." And he opened his eyes and looked up.

"Of course I could not believe it," said the

minister, positively. "Thou hast ever been an honest man, and that I'll testify in any court on earth."

"Bless thee, my pastor," mumbled Jedediah, gratefully.

"And although somewhat given to dislike of exertion and a few other failings common to sinful man," added Parson Davenport, "thou hast never brought disgrace to this Colony."

"Oh, I bless thee, my pastor," cried poor Beetle over and over again in the exuberance of his joy and gratitude, and with desperate attempts to wriggle his pleasure.

"Thou didst not have a crown piece," said the minister, more in a tone of an assertion than of a question.

"Oh, yes, I did, Passon Davenport."

"What do I hear?" Now was the minister surprised, and he repeated the question to receive the same reply.

"Well, then some one gave it to thee, Jedediah," at last declared Parson Davenport; "for I never will believe thee guilty of appropriating anything that was not thine own. Tell me who it was who put the crown piece in thy hand."

"I cannot tell thee," said Jedediah with a long breath.

"Cannot? Dost know who it is that commands thee?" cried the minister with dignity; "thy pas-

tor repeats it. Tell me instantly who it was who gave thee that crown piece that has brought thee to such trouble." A spasm of mortal distress passed over Beetle's face, and he wrung his large, bony hands together, not taking his blue eyes, with their depths of terror, from the minister's face, as he simply repeated, "Oh, I cannot, cannot tell thee."

"Now, thou sinful man," cried Parson Davenport, quite beside himself with righteous indignation, "dost thou know what sorrow thou wilt bring upon me and Mistress Davenport, who has ever sought to succor thee and encourage thee to rightful endeavor, if thou persist in thine obstinate and evil refusal to tell me the answer to my proper question?"

At this Jedediah collapsed into a shrunken heap of woe, his head falling once more upon his breast as he cried in a voice husky with agony, "I cannot tell thee, for I promised to speak naught of it."

And this, despite all that Minister Davenport could plead, expostulate, and command, was the most that could be obtained from him. Wearied, and at his wit's end to cope with such obstinacy, at last the good pastor left him in deeper woe than before.

On the morrow, as his accusers suddenly left town, there was naught to do but to release him, and as he would tell nothing as to the circum-

stances of the crown piece coming into his possession, he was led down to the whipping-post, the trunk of a tree some twelve feet high. This was beneath the public stocks, which were on a platform above. Still higher was the pillory, in which the head of the person to be punished was thrust through, as well as the hands. To avenge the honor of New Haven Town against which the two travelling strangers had dared to raise the cry of "theft," the magistrates decided to give the unfortunate accused thirty and nine lashes, since he would not clear himself by telling the truth concerning the crown piece.

Accordingly this was done. With white face and staring eyes Jedediah Beetle gave one long, lingering glance on the large crowd assembled, the market-place, the meeting-house, and the curve of the hills on either side of the town; then his gaze rested on the pale and drawn countenance of the Rev. John Davenport; and the culprit's dry and cracked lips opened. "They will always remember me as a thief."

"It was given to me by" — but the words were mumbled so that no one heard, and Jedediah, in a breathing space, had recovered his soul. His lips closed again, this time too tightly for speech; and when his chastisers finished their task, and spoke to him to take himself off, — for he did not even know when the rain of blows ceased, — he stag-

gered away like a man dazed to outward things. Yet the pitying ones in the crowd, and there were many, said that now his face was peace itself.

As for Goody Beetle, whom the townspeople viewed with but faint regard, she now became so violent that the magistrates yielded to the popular clamor, "Give her a ducking at Neck Bridge!"

"She's a witch, with a black cat, too," cried a voice; a cry that was taken up by more than one throat whose owners needed but little urging to convince them that the old woman was really a witch, whose familiar or evil spirit was the animal alluded to. Accordingly, off she was hauled, scolding herself hoarse every step of the way, till her cold bath effectually silenced, for a time at least, her objurgations. Then she crept, more dead than alive, to her poor cabin, the dangerous reputation raised by that evil cry, "A witch," to cling to her ever afterward.

Thus much trouble and confusion did that pair of travelling worthies stir up before their summary (and to those who knew not the episode in the tavern), inexplicable departure from the goodly town of New Haven in that year of our Lord 1661. Dennis Scranton, however, had been seen in thick converse with them on the road to New Amsterdam, and he parted from them in the sworn bonds of comradeship.

"Thy day and mine will come, honest brother

Scranton," were the last words of Captain Breedon. "And England will reward us well when we put in our completed work." And off they went, disputing, as ever, to whom belonged the honor of sending first information in regard to the presence of the Regicides in the Colonies.

"I gave first tidings of it," bluffed Captain Breedon. "Thou knowest that I suffered much and despicable abuse for my loyalty to my King. How did Governor Endicott answer me, 'without a commission from England none should meddle with them.' Faugh! I'd all I could do to keep from falling on him then and there, governor of that beggarly little handful of men!"

"Just the same difficulty to restrain thyself from action, I presume, Breedon," replied Colonel Crowne, with quiet venom, "as thou show'dst when that hulking fellow went for thee in yonder tavern."

"Hold thine infernal gab!" roared the captain, with a brace of oaths, and wincing at a sore spot. "And thou hast not much to boast of, fellow of the great Harvard College!" It was impossible to convey half of the malignance he felt; yet his tones sufficed to draw the colonel to a white heat of passion.

"And when the marshal-general of the country spoke up before all in the court room in the Massachusetts Colony and grinned in thy face with a

'Speak against Whalley and Goffe, if you dare — if you dare — if you dare!' oh, you did dare, didn't you?" and Captain Breedon doubled up and let his amusement have full vent.

"I make no ill plea when I say that *my* information as coming from a member of Harvard College" — and Colonel Crowne drew his thin figure up to its full height — "was worth double anything you might possibly have to offer, considering your sources."

"Member of Harvard College, indeed," mimicked Captain Breedon as well as he could in his thick, heavy tones; "that is a good one." And coming out of his spleen, he slapped his hands on his thigh, and swore till the air was blue and he had gotten back into complete good humor. So they departed, dropping their mantle to the shoulders of Dennis Scranton, while that worthy was setting his face homeward toward Guilford, his head big with plans as to what he would do, should the two Regicides venture from Cambridge or Boston Town into the New Haven Colony.

A fortnight spun past. And hearing a chance word dropped, over he came into New Haven, tramping with nervous haste and irritability. "The Regicides in New Haven!" clapping his hands together and having great difficulty as he stamped on to keep from shrieking it aloud. "I'll see for myself before I send word, so they can be

caught. My 'day has come,' as Captain Breedon said, 'and England will reward me well.'" He hugged himself in rapture. "Oh, that I should be the one to get on their trail!"

He ran up into the market-place on his arrival in the town, in his eagerness inquiring of the first person he met therein, "Know you aught of the Regicides; are they here as the story goes?"

"The Judges, do you mean?" corrected the other. "Ay, ay, that they are. Why, there goes one now, that's Goffe." He pointed to a muscular figure, with a pair of shoulders and a head, once seen, not to be forgotten, passing leisurely across the market-place. Scranton stared with a shock that made him reel to one side of the road; he staggered and put his hand to his head. It was the stranger who had taken the part of the Colonies in the tap-room of the tavern.

But the quiet bearing of the figure crossing the market-place of New Haven Town on that March day belied the tumult within the man. The hounds were on his path; and more for the sake of the elder man than for his own safety was his soul torn. A hurried consultation with Mr. Jones and Minister Davenport in that upper room of the parsonage, and General Whalley is helped down, and to the back of a horse. General Goffe mounts another. "We will say good-by to our good friends

at the tavern," he says significantly, and off they dash in that direction.

Before the hostelry an unusual crowd is collecting. Scranton had rushed off for reënforcements that, judging from previous acquaintance with General Goffe in that episode at the tavern mentioned before, he deemed advisable; and though there were some lowering brows in the company that greeted the two men on horseback, all was outwardly respectful, for the townspeople had learned to honor these visitors as the guests of the Reverend John Davenport.

"We seek to bid you all good-by," said General Goffe, sitting his horse lightly, and waving his hand to them, "and to thank you for the many courtesies that have been bestowed on us since our arrival here."

"And we are sorry to have you go," spoke up a voice but timidly, for a king's displeasure was in the air, with its nameless terrors.

"And we are sorry to part," quoth General Goffe, cheerily; "but part we must. How far is it to Manhattan? When shall we reach there, think you?" He addressed himself to the crowd; but the landlord answered, —

"A good seventy mile; and you must needs be slow, on account of the bad roads."

"It behooves us to speed on our journey at once then," said General Goffe. General Whalley

sat throughout the interview in dignified silence, only bowing his stately head as they turned their horses off.

"Is there not a river below Milford?" queried Goffe, pausing a moment, with tightened rein.

"Yes, but the Indians will help you across; then it is easy enough to reach Fairfield. After that, why, you must fare as you can."

"May God be with you," ejaculated General Goffe, turning back in his saddle and raising his hat. Then both set their horses to the canter, and disappeared toward Milford.

And Dennis Scranton, swearing at his ill luck in not finding just the right reënforcements for his project, came back to the tavern to find the birds flown.

In the early morning twilight of the following day there was darkness in the upper chamber of the parsonage — the shutters closed — and muffled voices. The minister's eyes streamed forth tears down his thin cheeks as he raised his hands in prayer, scarcely audible to the two above whose weary heads he offered it. Faithful William Jones's shrewd conduct had brought them under cover of the night secretly back from Milford. "Thank God, you are safe. Let us trust Him for further deliverance."

X

THE storm had broken bounds, set free by the royal proclamation for the arrest of the two Judges, and from Boston Town the whirlwind descended upon the goodly town of New Haven.

Every one who had talked with the fugitives so lately was chary of speech regarding such meeting, excepting the company at the tavern, witnesses to the departure for Manhattan. This was loudly proclaimed by mine host and the rest of them, to be met with sighs of relief from all quarters that the Colony of New Netherland had become the burden-bearer of the unwelcome and dangerous guests.

Stout hearts were quaking, for it would take but little, they well knew in this troubled time, for the royal wrath to descend upon their Colony. And they had harbored the Judges!

Most of all was the fear for their beloved pastor, whose indomitable spirit had already marked him in the mother country as tainted with rebellion. He would never give the hunted men up if they stood between him and his own safety, that the

whole Colony knew. However, — and these citizens breathed freer at the thought, — the hospitality thus far shown was not a crime. Now that the royal proclamation would make it treason to assist the pursued subjects of an angry king, the two Judges were outside their jurisdiction. So, after all, there was no just cause to fear, they argued.

Meanwhile the hounds upon the track of the hunted men were not idle, mark you. And thanks to Scranton and his crowd, looks askance began to be directed toward Minister Davenport; not that any were so wild as to suppose the fugitives were in the parsonage, but it was felt in some quarters that perhaps the parson could give information, if he would, as to their exact whereabouts. The Rev. John Davenport, going along his private way from his study to the meeting-house, or mounting the pulpit stairs, or crossing the market-place, felt these glances. And his step was as secure, his smile as serene, as when passing, in those happy days of yore, down London Town streets, with fingers pointed at him, "See the great preacher Davenport."

Mr. William Jones stepped to the rescue. "I shall have them at my house this night," so he briefly stated, shutting the door of the study behind him the 30th of April.

The minister looked up from the volume of sermons he was calmly reading.

"Not safe for them a moment longer here,"

declared Mr. Jones, abruptly. Never a word of Minister Davenport's safety! "You know my house will not be suspected; besides, abundant means for concealment rest there."

Parson Davenport nodded, and thoughtfully held his finger in the book to keep the place.

"Prepare them for the change, and we will make it this night." Then followed hurried plans; and the next day's dawn the big Jones mansion across the way could have told a tale if it would. Still the Rev. John Davenport came in for the looks askance.

And now two horsemen gallop — gallop along the road from Boston Town, themselves and their beasts covered with dust, oblivious of the beauty of May springing up on every hand, if they may only reach Deputy and Acting Governor Leet as speedily as possible! No fear that the scoundrels, those miserable Regicides, will not be caught now! With the warrant in Kellond's doublet pocket, issued by Governor Endicott, to search Massachusetts Colony, and a corresponding document from Governor Winthrop for the Colony of Connecticut, how in the name of justice, and with the fear of the King before his eyes, could Acting Governor Leet refuse to give them a similar warrant covering the jurisdiction of New Haven Colony? They laughed to each other at the thought, as they sped along at top speed. Besides, there was the royal man-

date, dated March 5, to arrest Whalley and Goffe. Were ever two emissaries so well fortified and equipped!

"All this, with the warrant Acting Governor Leet will give us, will cover the ground to the Dutch at Manhattan," cried Kellond, tapping his doublet pocket significantly and spurring on. Ah, if they could only have foreseen the precious confusion and delay to be gained from the blundering mandate from England they bore, addressed, "To our trusty and well-beloved, the present Governor or other Magistrate or Magistrates of our plantation of New England." In all history there seems no stranger blunder! But Kellond and Kirk, those two zealous young royalists, are unconscious, as are those who committed the blunder; and as happy as kings, for dancing before their eyes is the approval of his sacred Majesty and the English Parliament; and golden reward and emoluments, and generous grants of land in the rich Colonies, will be, they are sure, the price of their service. So on they spur into Guilford Town, and gallop up to the home of Deputy Governor Leet, chief magistrate since the death of Governor Newman, of the New Haven Colony.

Lucy Leet saw them coming, and heard their request for an audience with the Deputy Governor. Hurrying into his private room where Goodman Meigs and Goodman Thompson sat by him at the

table, she proclaimed the arrival in tones of admiration. Were they not young and comely? "Father, two men are without, who desire to talk with thee."

"Show them in," said the Deputy Governor, gruffly, and without looking up from his papers.

Kellond and Kirk stepped in proudly, with never a glance for the maid, their heads engrossed with big concerns, which was a pity; for she bridled and colored high at the omission. And better it is to have the best wishes of a maiden on one's side, especially the daughter of the chief magistrate of the Colony, if one desires his business speedily executed.

"Your business?" Deputy Governor Leet was not impressed by the appearance of the two men. To him, beauty and comeliness of figure was nothing to despatch in executive affairs, so he curtly repeated, "What dost thou want?"

"A similar document to this, and one that will allow us to search thy Colony for these renegades," said Kellond, spreading the precious papers from his inner pocket upon the table in full view.

Deputy Governor Leet changed color, shifted his chair, then glanced meaningly at his two friends. "What is this?" he cried, gaining his official manner at once.

"'To our trusty and well-beloved, the present

Governor or other Magistrate or Magistrates of our plantation of New England — Charles R.

"'Trusty and well beloved wee greete you well. Wee being given to understand that Colonell Whalley and Colonell Goffe, who stand here convicted for the execrable murther of —'"

"Stay, stay," cried Kellond, who had been fidgeting about, trying to interrupt the lusty tones of the Deputy Governor and now breaking in wildly, "this should not be read in this manner."

"Eh?" cried the Deputy Governor, turning a bewildered face at him. Kirk broke in excitedly, "It is private business," and he glanced at Goodman Meigs and Goodman Thompson.

"To be sure," assented the Governor, not taking the hint. "It is an old habit to raise my voice above the common." So he began down in his throat, as if perfectly willing to accommodate reasonable requests, and very rapidly.

"'Murther of our Royall Father of glorious memory, are lately arrived in New England, where they hope to shroud themselves securely from our laws; our will and pleasure is and we do hereby expressly require and command you forthwith, upon the receipt of these our letters, to cause both the said persons to be —'"

"Do you not understand," almost shrieked Kellond, forcing his voice in between the torrent,

"that I object to your reading such private concernments before others?"

"'Apprehended,'" read the Deputy Governor in a clear voice, finding difficulty in stopping himself. "Oh, certainly, sir, if it embarrasses you, I will ask my two friends to withdraw. They will be perfectly willing to do so, I make no manner of doubt."

"Surely. Good day, gentlemen." Goodman Meigs got off from his chair, and with a stolid face that betokened only impatience at the interruption of his business with the Chief Magistrate of the Colony, who bade them return in a half hour to conclude their affairs, he stumbled awkwardly to the door, followed by Goodman Thompson. Once in the entry, how changed! "A horse; I must get news to New Haven," hoarsely breathed Jonathan Meigs.

Lucy heard the cry, low as it was. "Dost want a horse, Goodman Meigs?" she asked, putting her pretty head without the keeping-room door, "and is it for aught to circumvent the plans of yon two men, who I ken are here for no good to the Colony?" She had so soon forgotten the leap of her heart under her bodice at first sight of them.

Goodman Meigs bit his short upper lip, then looked at the girl. "Lucy, I've known you from a baby; and you'll not go behind your word."

"Never," said Lucy, firmly.

"Then let me take your horse, for God's sake." His cheek was white, and his eye fierce, as he grasped her arm. "Yes, those men mean mischief to the Colony" — he dared not tell her all. "Give me the horse."

"Thou hast it already, foolish Goodman Meigs," whispered Lucy, enjoined by the clutch on her arm; "the mare waits for the saddle. Take my brother's." She pushed him without, and rushed back into the keeping room, a smile on her lips, and a dangerous look in her eye.

Deputy Governor Leet finished with great deliberation the perusal of the royal order.

"'Apprehended, and with the first opportunity sent over hither under a strict care, to receive according to their demerits. Wee are confident of your readiness and diligence to perform your duty; and so bid you farewell.

"'Given at our Court at Whitehall, the 5th of March, 1660.

"'By his Majesty's Command

"'EDW. NICHOLAS

"Now what do you expect me to do for you, gentlemen?" Deputy Governor Leet pushed back his chair and looked them all over.

"To give us a warrant to search all houses in the Colony of New Haven," cried Kellond and

Kirk together. "If suspicions be true, we'll nab the wretches within these borders."

"Softly, softly, there," replied Deputy Governor Leet, yet sadly put about by the looks and words of the royalists. "I must move in a legal and circumspect way; thou wouldst not deny that, else I would get thee into trouble, besides myself and the Colony. Look you,"—he spread the royal order straight on the shining mahogany, then read again slowly every word of the address in a painstaking manner, almost maddening to the hot blood that longed for pursuit without the loss of a second.

"'To our trusty and well-beloved, the present Governor or other Magistrate or Magistrates of our plantation of New England.' . . . Why, this is not for me to act upon. This Colony has never been known as 'the Plantation of New England,' I must consider; it is of the greatest importance to be right in the steps I take."

"What wilt thou do then?" demanded Kellond, furious at the delay.

"Return this afternoon and I will tell thee," said the Deputy Governor, and fortified by the blunder in the royal order he assumed his stiffest aspect and bowed them out. This being all they could get out of him, they withdrew discomfited. The first person they ran into, unfortunately, on their way to the inn proved to be Dennis Scranton.

Scranton drew them away from the alluring vicinity of the tavern to a quiet place beyond earshot. "I know where they be," he cried. "Quick; lose no time in leaving Guilford. The scoundrels are cooling their heels in New Haven."

"Art giving us truth?" demanded Kirk, suspiciously, at the ill appearance of the colonist.

"On my soul and body," cried Scranton, "and if thou makest it worth my while, I can put ye both on their track."

Kellond thrust aside his doublet enough to disclose a leathern bag that jingled to the touch. The sound made Scranton's mouth water, and his little eyes winked avariciously.

"I'll do the job for ye then," he said, "never ye fear." Then by a sudden impulse he leaned over and whispered, "*Parson Davenport can tell ye all about them, for they lodge either there or at William Jones's, the big house across the road.*"

"If thou shouldst play us false," exclaimed Kellond, with black brows, and with hand on pistol beneath his coat-skirt, "I would as soon let daylight through thy skin, for a traitor to servants of his gracious Majesty, King Charles the Second."

"I'll prove to ye that I speak the truth," cried Scranton, hoarsely, yet shrinking from the hand tapping the pistol; "for William Jones's father was a Reg'cide, and —"

"Say you so?" interrupted Kirk, gladly; "well,

to be sure, this is a clew indeed. Was he executed?"

"I d'no anything about his bein' ex'cuted," said Scranton, "but his head was cut off; that's all I know, and Parson Davenport, ye've heard all about him, I s'pose?"

Yes, they knew, those two young royalists did, the stuff they had to tackle in the Rev. John Davenport, and they made up their minds to go carefully.

"Once we get the warrant from Deputy Governor Leet in our hands this Saturday afternoon, it will be only a question of hours and minutes ere we have the wretches in our grasp." So said the two young royalists.

"*Fly — they must fly!*" Meigs, white-faced, the perspiration streaming at every pore, dashed into the minister's study, where the good divine sat polishing up his next day's sermon.

Parson Davenport's hand did not tremble, nor his face change color; yet a look came into his eyes to make sinners tremble. "Calm thyself," he said to the man shaking like a leaf before him; "thy horse?"

"Is well hidden under the copse. Oh, sir, the Judges, — if here, get them out, I pray thee. Two Englishmen are after them at Governor Leet's."

"Spare thy words." The minister got out of his chair, "Do thou stay here till thou recoverest

breath and composure." He reached his peaked hat down from a peg behind the door and took up his oaken staff. "When thou canst get so as not to attract attention, come over yonder." He pointed to Mr. William Jones's mansion with his walking-stick, went out, closing the door behind him, and addressing some quiet remark in passing to the occupants of the parsonage whom he chanced to meet, proceeded leisurely across the way with head bent as though conning his Sabbath day sermon. Jonathan Meigs threw himself down on his knees, by the well-worn leather chair just vacated by the pastor, and buried his face in his hands.

Meantime, Deputy Governor Leet was having a stormy time with his two English callers. Entreaty, nay perilously near to threatening words were used by the latter. The chief Magistrate of the New Haven Colony sat back in his chair, and drummed on the shining mahogany before him with perplexed fingers.

"I cannot come to a mind to give thee this desired warrant," he repeated, tapping the royal order. "I have conned it over and over. It gives me no authority to move alone in the matter."

"Thou knowest the sense of it," declared Kellond in a passion.

"Young man," cried the Deputy Governor in a tone that gave a new idea to the English mind of the colonial temper and how far it might be

tried, "say no more; thou surely hast discernment enough to understand that in all matters pertaining to this Colony over which I am in charge, I should be liable to be brought up with a round turn did I give authority that I am not by this royal order legally empowered to grant." He slapped the document in question, this time with no gentle hand. Kellond and Kirk both started involuntarily; it was as if their ears were being boxed.

"It would only do thee harm also," proceeded Deputy Governor Leet, "to be caught acting in an illegal way, upon a document blunderingly drawn up."

"We are willing to take the risk," cried both young men, eagerly.

"That may be," said the Deputy Governor, dryly, "but as I am not, neither for you nor myself and this Colony, the matter stands just as I told you an hour ago."

Breath would be wasted, both emissaries knew, by further urging. Kellond thrust his hands in despair into his trousers pockets, — that refuge of man in critical moments in all times and countries, — and stalked up and down the room. Kirk sat in stolid silence.

"What wilt thou do then?" Kellond snapped out, coming close to the big table, with a glance that would annihilate had he the power. "I tell

thee again, I have almost certain knowledge that the murderers are lodged at one of the houses in New Haven, — the minister's or that of one Jones opposite."

"So you have said before," remarked Deputy Governor Leet, composedly, though his heart was going like a trip hammer under his waistcoat. "Strange that thou shouldst have picked up information that is lacking for us who belong to this Colony," he added, throwing as much irony as possible into his speech.

"Those who do not desire knowledge can remain ignorant." Kellond could not restrain his angry tongue. Deputy Governor Leet looked him through and through. "I beg your pardon," stammered the young man.

"It is well thou dost." The Deputy Governor bowed gravely. "Again, I give you my answer. I cannot move in this matter alone, but to show thee that I loyally obey, as far as I can, our Majesty's mandate, I will confer with the Magistrate, Master Gilbert at New Haven. It is now four o'clock, and at sundown, as thou well knowest, no business can be attended to in the Colony."

"Curse thy puritanical laws!" Kellond said in his heart, and his face turned livid at the further delay. "Monday morning I shall go to New Haven, and set the affair in motion in the proper and legal way."

It was impossible for the two eager young Englishmen to contain themselves at this. But it was all they could get; and with the greatest courtesy, but the firmness of an old granite bowlder, Acting Governor Leet saw them depart.

"Now I'd like nothing so much as to have the privilege of smashing that old renegade's head," cried Kellond, on the way to the tavern to drown their angry sorrow in the flowing cup. Kirk struck in with an oath or two. "By my soul, I'd rather do it first, before hooking the Regicides. Well, the only comfort is, the whole tribe of the puritanical, conceited, psalm-singing dogs is soon to to be brought to terms. They'll go down with Oliver himself to the dunghill. Soon come the day, say I!"

Jonathan Meigs was in his accustomed seat the next day in the Guilford meeting-house. Pretty Lucy Leet glanced demurely at him, and after the long service managed to whisper on the way to the Deputy Governor's residence, "And didst thou accomplish what thou desirest yesterday?"

"Sh — sh — child, yes," said Meigs, not turning his head. "Be careful what thou sayest; the birds of the air might hear thee."

"They are very sinful young men, and should find their plans come to naught," observed Lucy, severely. "They came not to the service." Her pink lutestring was donned for nothing, and she

heaved a sigh. "I have no doubt that their visit bodes ill for the Colony." To hear her speech, one would suppose it some staid colonist holding forth.

Jonathan Meigs looked down into the rosebud face. "Do not bother thy head with affairs belonging to the Colony, Lucy," he said; "life is bright for thee, and do thou enjoy it and let sombre matters alone."

"Indeed, I shall," she cried, with a pretty *moue*. "Next week I am going to the merrymaking over at Farmer Sperry's in New Haven; Marcia Sabine comes home from New Netherland on the morrow, and this is to give her welcome."

"Is it so?" replied Meigs, glad to get the maiden from the dangerous track to the safe ground of general conversation.

"Yes, I go Monday to Mr. Jones's to visit," vouchsafed Lucy, quite important with her news, and smoothing the pink lutestring, so soon to shine at the festivity. "My mother hath promised me. Mr. Jones doth set great store by Farmer Sperry, and Mrs. Jones hath lent her rug pattern to Goodwife Sperry, and she has given her a riband for her pelisse."

"Indeed," said Jonathan Meigs, endeavoring to be impressed.

"Yes, and there is some talk of having Marcia to supper at Mr. Jones's. They will, if she only

promises to marry Will Hepburn, for Mr. Jones hath great liking for him also, and has tried to get him to work in his mill; but Will says he will not leave Farmer Sperry." Lucy dealt out her budget of news with an important air, but, like a wise little woman, saved the best for the last.

"But I will tell thee"—she crept closer to Goodman Meigs in the narrow path—"I have strange thoughts that qualm me somewhat about going to Dame Jones's. They do say"—and her voice sank to a whisper—"that the Regicides, those wicked men, are hidden there, and it makes me fear." She laid her hand on her breast, and glanced around.

"Now, Lucy, what idle talk!" exclaimed Meigs, in smothered accents. "Where heard you it?" he demanded in tones of displeasure.

"It is all around," said Lucy, shaking her bright curls that not all the puritanical brushes in Guilford could have kept straight; "but methinks Dennis Scranton says so the most."

"And canst thou, a governor's daughter, listen to speech from such a source as that vagabond?" reproved Goodman Meigs, waxing indignant with each word.

"Nay, do not be angry," cried Lucy, who, from toddling days, had adopted the sturdy colonist into her favor. "I heard it not from him. Didst think for an instant I would so abase myself as to

exchange speech with such as he?" and she wrinkled her red lips in pretty scorn. "But he has scattered the news, and it came by respectable ways to me."

"Dismiss it from thy mind then," said Jonathan Meigs, sternly, "for it savors not of truth. The men you speak of are not at Mr. Jones's; and remember, Lucy, say not the word Regicides in connection with them. They are Judges, and as such only are to be known."

"Dost know that?" asked Lucy, to the first statement, with wide-open eyes.

"Yes—yes, I know it; but say not I told thee," cried Meigs, hastily. "Only if any come to thee with a different tale, do thou speak up boldly and laugh them to scorn."

"I will," assented Lucy, as the two now neared the Chief Magistrate's house; "I will say the Regicides are not—"

"Regicides? I told thee not to speak that name in connection with these two men," said Meigs, decidedly, and with a disapproving glance.

"Didst thou so?" cried Lucy, pausing in surprise, her foot upon the big stepping-stone that indicated the path to the door.

"Yes, yes, they are Judges. Remember to call them only by this name." Just then strode by in their red coats and with dashing appearance the two young Englishmen of yesterday's acquaint-

ance. They bent a meaning gaze on Jonathan Meigs and his companion.

Lucy's color rose high, matching the pink lutestring. "They look comely, I am sure," she remarked, watching them down the road, "and they step prettily together."

Jonathan Meigs, remembering the look, set his lips together tightly, and jammed his peaked hat further on his brow with a hasty hand. Kellond was then saying to Kirk, "The same fellow — we will keep an eye on him — he means mischief."

"He has had time enough to cover twice sixteen miles to New Haven and back, and do his mischief," observed Kirk, who, if slower of speech and action than his companion, sometimes arrived at the truth as soon.

Magistrate Gilbert, Mr. William Jones, and last, though not least, the Rev. John Davenport. Ah! it will be hard to outwit those three cool-headed, devout adherents to the Cause of Liberty and the religion of Jesus Christ. Away from the Jones mansion with its luxury and tender repose, to the confines of the mill owned by the wealthy host, the hunted Judges are conveyed to pass this momentous Sabbath, when their pursuers are chafing at their restraint over in Guilford. And on Monday, that day so pregnant of safety or capture, the depth of the wood gathers them in, till a shelter can be found where they may lay their

poor tired heads. So we come to the thread of our story, and introduce again pretty Marcia Sabine hasting over the bridle path, and crooning her New Netherland song, to meet, as we have seen, the crisis of her life, which henceforth the principles of Liberty shall command.

XI

"GIRL," cried her aunt the next morning, with sudden rancor, "I had nearly forbid ye the house for a traitor."

Marcia stopped, half across the kitchen floor, a pile of dishes in her hands, and her color flamed high.

"Aunt," she begged feebly like a little child who would ward off a blow.

"Oh, now you are sorry; but wait until all fingers are pointed at you for a traitor. Oh, woe is come to this house, that I should harbor an enemy to our country; for those Judges are good men and friends to the Colonies, and ye have played into the hands of English spies."

Goodwife Sperry's thin, delicate face shook with passion. "Husband," she cried, to a noise indicating Farmer Sperry in the woodshed, "thou art beside thyself, I well know, at the shame of it all, but wilt not chide the girl for the love thou hast for her. So do I love her," here Dame Sperry's voice choked with tears; "but I must speak my mind, else she will go from bad to worse."

The woodshed became quiet at once, and Farmer

Sperry ran, as he had not for many a day, to his work on the outermost edge of the farm.

Down went the pile of dishes to the table. Marcia, who had rapidly changed from the helpless pleading of a child to a white heat, goaded thereto by her aunt's last words, now suddenly relaxed at the tears and the expression of affection not usual in the repressed atmosphere of a New England household of that day.

"Oh, aunt, aunt," she sobbed, running over to the good woman's chair; and huddling on the floor, she buried her face in the blue stuff gown, her supple figure quivering like a leaf.

"Why didst thou do it — oh, why didst thou do it?" mourned Goodwife Sperry, tremulously, her fingers smoothing the bright brown hair.

"Ask me not, I cannot tell," moaned Marcia.

"I know it; it was but a sudden freak; and thou dost not know thyself why thou didst the cruel thing. Marcia, the devil desiredst to have thee and sift thee as wheat. Oh, if thou hadst but come forward, and joined thyself to His people when Pastor Davenport has urged thee, this shame and temptation would not have overcome thee. And now, oh, I had all but said, thou canst not live it down; for it is by this time all over New Haven, and spread half through the Colony by means of the company last night. Oh, God, what an end to our merrymaking we made for thee!"

Will Hepburn, with heavy eyelids and white face, a stranger to sleep, heard the voices as he stood without. He started into the kitchen. "Blame her not harshly," he cried in a hoarse voice, his heart brooding over the crouching girl; "Goodwife Sperry, desist, I pray thee."

"Thine authority hath no exercise here," declared Dame Sperry, turning her tear-stained face with dignity to him; "for thou art not yet married to the girl. Ah," a spasm of pain convulsed her, "now thou wilt not want her belike; for who would mate with a traitor."

Marcia sprang to her feet in white wrath. "Marry him! As true as there is a God above, I'd not mate with him were it to save my soul." And she swept out of the kitchen.

Down by the market-place, the town was in a ferment. In each house, from the Jones mansion to the merest hovel, was it common talk by this time, that Marcia Sabine had sold herself to the Evil One (according to the boldest statement) by betraying the Judges to their English pursuers. No one dared to say much; for the perilous edge of a precipice stretched before the eyes of colonists who might be careless of speech and action. But all the fiercer, on that very account, raged the excitement; and scorn for the girl who had turned her back on all womanly instincts, and the admonitions of the Rev. Minister Davenport, filled every breast.

This excitement paled that of the previous day, when Deputy Governor Leet rode over from Guilford, bringing with him Magistrate Jasper Crane of Branford. They proceeded to the meeting-house, where the sessions of the General Court were held. To-day's assembly, however, was the Court of Magistracy, before which the Deputy Governor desired to submit the royal order for a decision as to its interpretation by the New Haven Colony. Presently appeared Magistrate Benjamin Fenn of Milford, and after him Magistrate Matthew Gilbert and several deputies of New Haven Town; then, last, but by no means least, the doughty figure of Magistrate Robert Treat of Milford towered in the meeting-house.

The crowd outside, augmented constantly by the news of the sitting of the Magistrates and its cause, was swelled occasionally by turbulent fellows of the baser sort, who always fringe any town excitement. A general desire to see the young Englishmen who had brought the King's order for the arrest of the fugitives also allured the more excitable sort of folk in the community, so that the noise and confusion without disturbed the deliberations of the officials of the Colony who desired that time for conference before Kellond and Kirk should put in an appearance.

Magistrate Treat took in the situation, and soon appeared in the doorway. He raised his hand, and fixed the crowd with his eye.

"This noise is unseemly, and your gathering here is not approved. Do thou disperse," he commanded, and in a few seconds it would have been hard to find man, woman, or child who craved a position by the meeting-house. So it was that the two young Englishmen walked up to the very door amid absolute stillness, save as they met a subdued hum of voices broken immediately on their entrance.

All formalities were most punctiliously observed. Kellond and Kirk, who came prepared to scoff at the country bumpkin style of playing at Court and Court usages, were astonished to find themselves listening with something very like respect to the dignified utterances of these colonists, who may have had horny hands that told of toil, and rugged features that exposed an anxious past; but whose mental forces were alert enough, and who laid down the law in a way to cause the young English emissaries to feel callow indeed.

Neither one of the three men — Pastor Davenport, Mr. Jones, and Farmer Sperry, the only ones who knew the whereabouts of the fugitives — had told it to Deputy Governor Leet. It was best that he should be kept in ignorance; at least, for the present. So now, after the proper introductions had taken place, he spoke: —

"Gentlemen, your errand is probably a fruitless one so far as New Haven Colony is concerned.

The objects of your search are doubtless well without our borders."

"It need not be fruitless," Kellond found his tongue abruptly, "if your honor will give us the warrant that ought to have been in our hands two days ago."

"We beg your pardon," said Deputy Governor Leet, more inclined to suavity than on their former meetings, yet still built on the same lines as the granite bowlder; "I have already informed you the proper ground on which I stand. I cannot, and will not, make you Magistrates. This is authority beyond what this paper, drawn up as it is," — he tapped the royal order as it lay on the table, — "could give to me."

Kirk, notwithstanding his reluctance to speak, felt it incumbent to make an effort in this direction, as his companion stood silent, grinding his teeth in vexation. "We suspect — nay, your honors," he addressed himself to the whole body, "we have every reason to believe that this very moment these criminals are concealed in a house scarcely a stone's throw from this building."

"Who told you that story?" thundered Magistrate Treat. But the two young men, preferring to dodge this shot, stood dumb, and dropped their eyes, not looking at each other. Besides, they were going to keep all clews to themselves.

Then ensued a long deliberation; the Deputy

Governor and the Magistrates coming out of it firmly intrenched in their position not to empower the Englishmen to search the houses of the Colony on the basis of any such paper as the one submitted to them.

"Then will your honors please to order the search to be made by some other man?" Kellond cried, roused to desperation. Already the two men saw, with their mind's eye, the fugitives slipping away from the parsonage or from the Jones mansion to the secluded depths of the wilderness so near to the edge of the town, and they could have howled aloud in their fury. "His gracious Majesty will visit the severest resentment on any disregard of his express command."

"We honor his Majesty, but we have tender consciences," replied the Deputy Governor with deep gravity.

"Tender consciences!" How the two English emissaries anathematized such tenderness, and just longed to get even with the Roundheads and the whole lot of cavilling Puritans. Kellond, in particular, would have relinquished at that moment half his share of the booty to be paid on the completion of the job, for the sight of that detested granite bowlder laid low. Tender consciences! Faugh! But all he could do was to squirm silently and endure the further consultation of three hours, every minute of which was a torture. Kirk, how-

ever, bore it more philosophically and spent the time, while the Magistrates were deliberating, in concocting fresh plans of action. When the decision was reached, Kellond, the hot-blooded, looked the more hopeful of the two. As usual, he found himself the spokesman.

"We trust your honors have decided to do your duty in loyalty to his Majesty," he said.

"We are endeavoring, as we have ever done, to do our duty," the Deputy Governor answered him with some severity. "We are under oath to so conduct the affairs of this Colony as shall meet with the approval of God, and beyond that we cannot take a step."

"Will you own his Majesty or no?" cried Kirk in a sharp voice, and for once determined to come to the point by himself.

"It is quite as important to know if his Majesty will own us." The Deputy Governor thus laid the young man flat, metaphorically speaking; but something surely must be done to appease the English emissaries and to satisfy all loyalists and patriots alike, that the King's message was not disdained. For the weight of a feather might bring the balance containing the destiny of this fair Colony to the dust, were this day's deliberation to end unwisely. It was possible that some man selected by the court might be given authority to prosecute the search.

The quill held in the hand of the Deputy Governor paused over the paper that might be made to bear across its face such a warrant. He looked up and caught the steadfast eye of Robert Treat.

"It seemeth to me best to leave the whole matter to the General Court," said Magistrate Treat. "This question concerneth the whole people, so long as this mandate is not expressly directed to us as Magistrates of the New Haven Colony, and methinks we would do wrong to act without the express direction of the court. We can call a special session and have the whole question settled with but little delay."

No need to wait for any further remarks. The two English emissaries recognized that the session was at an end as far as they were concerned. Going out of the meeting-house in passion, they ran across Dennis Scranton, never very far removed from them during these days. He had melted away with the crowd, when dispersed by Magistrate Treat, to hang about until the adjournment. He now rushed up to the Englishmen and fired their angry disappointment with some special bit of news he had managed to ferret out during the past few hours. The consequence was that the two young men got to their horses at once, shook their fists at the meeting-house, and clattered off in the direction of Sperry's farm, vowing to give prudence to the winds, and to wait for

no movement on the part of these purposely dilatory officers of the Colony, but to pursue this fresh clew, and capture the birds without a warrant, trusting to the leniency of a happy king to pardon any slight unofficial observance, in view of the splendid service they rendered.

And then New Haven Town was struck dumb with horror at the deed of Marcia Sabine, spread on the wings of the wind, and filling with the direst apprehension the minds of the slender band of patriots, who were determined to save the Judges at the risk of their own lives.

XII

"ART thou mad?" Will Hepburn forgot the disparity of years, forgot his respect for the qualities and standing in the community of his master, and he seized Farmer Sperry roughly by the arm. "For God's sake, tell me what thou meanest to let the girl go."

Farmer Sperry turned a white, set face to him. "I tell thee of a truth, thou wilt be her undoing unless thou holdest thy tongue, for thou knowest her temper. No harm can befall her with Poganuc by. Hush thee, Will," his mouth was now close to the young man's ear, "and trust me, to whom the maiden is also the apple of mine eye."

Hepburn strangely moved, and overpowered by a will stronger than his own, fell back; the group of young people, with teeth chattering and nerves keyed up, found the merrymaking no longer desirable with Marcia gone and in such a way — a traitor to her country. So pillions began to be mounted and good-bys were said; and the fine feast, so lately spread with pride, showed only a few crumbs of débris to prove the slender attention it had received. Lucy Leet, who had small

love for Sylvy Bunce, did not hesitate to fly up to Will Hepburn, and thus intercepting the girl already at his side, "Oh, Will, take me home to Mr. Jones's," she said.

Will surveyed her gloomily. "I would, Lucy," he managed to throw some kindness into his tone, for he respected her, "but I must stay here to see what may be done for Marcia."

Farmer Sperry heard it. "Thou canst not help Marcia," he said somewhat crustily. "I tell thee she is as safe with Poganuc by her side as though the whole Colony guarded her. Thou well knowest thy presence angers her." Will could only groan and acknowledge within himself that this was too true.

"So do thou conduct Lucy safely to Mr. Jones's," added Goodman Sperry, in a tone that brooked no opposition. By this means the farm-house was left almost alone with its scarcely disturbed feast in its centre, Goodwife Sperry wringing her hands in dismay at the turn affairs had taken, and the blight that had settled upon all her cherished plans to display her cookery; while black Chloe, who had heard nothing of all this tumult, and therefore dreaded the worst, wallowed on her knees in prayer in the corner, her apron over her head.

Marcia went swiftly over the clearing, carrying her head erect on its slender neck like a young goddess. More than half afraid, for she looked

as though treading on air, and as sent from some superior height, came Kellond and Kirk with their lanterns, and horse pistols, and all else needful to protect themselves and their cause. Back of them, with a steady tread, strode the stalwart figure with powerful arms and watchful eyes that let no movement on their part escape. Kellond and Kirk cast more than one uneasy glance over their shoulders.

"Between that girl ahead," said the former in a low voice, as they neared the forest, "and that devil of an Indian in our rear, I suspect some mischief," and he laid his fingers on one of his pistols.

Kirk of a slower blood held more courage in his skin, when one took account of stock of these two Englishmen. "I fancy not," he answered; "at any rate, we can get the best of them if they attempt any low-down tricks."

"I don't know," said Kellond, "she looks not like any flesh and blood I've seen in these beggarly Colonies; and here witches thrive, and the spirits of evil are rampant. I would we had men to contend with, instead of that girl."

"Take what you can get," advised Kirk, philosophically. "In a trice we shall have our fingers on the Regicides' throats," — which was prefaced by an oath not printable, — "and you will forget everything else."

Kellond brightened up. The reward, — golden, — with land grants, and royal encomiums, and praises in Parliament, danced before his eyes. He plunged forward, his hand on his companion's arm. Poganuc started on a quicker and longer stride, closing up the interval.

Marcia threaded her way with steps like thistledown, it seemed to the two pursuers. In and out she went along the forest edge, seeming to their unaccustomed eyes like one inspired, until she struck the bridle path; then she glided within its depths, and went rapidly down the trail further and further, till Kellond swore to himself softly and with shaking nerves that he was a fool to trust himself to this creature, whom now he determined was of the ilk that smelt of witchcraft. And he shut his eyes to avoid the uncanny swaying of her white dress in the fitful gleam of the lanterns as she flitted ahead of them in the sepulchral forest depths.

All was darkness and gloom, save where the lanterns flickered their wavering rays of light. To the excited mind of Kellond, at least, it seemed as if the forest primeval, innocent of the foot of man, had been reached. Even Kirk's less emotional nature was touched.

"Hold!" Kellond was just about to say, keyed up beyond restraint, "we will go no further," when suddenly Marcia's foot paused. "It was here,"

she said, pointing solemnly into the deeper shade (if that were possible) removed from the slender bridle path, "that I met the two men you seek by the command of my King."

"It is a trap for our feet," exclaimed Kellond, hanging back instinctively. Rewards might be all very well, and admiring plaudits from royal lips, but a whole skin served a man better, after all.

"It may be a trap," cried Kirk, plunging off from the bridle path, "but nevertheless I investigate it." Seeing which, and desiring "to be in at the death," Kellond struck boldly in after him, to dash here and there swinging his lantern, regardless of Marcia's quiet voice, so eager was he for a crack at the Roundhead criminal.

"One asked me the way to Manhattan," she was saying, when at last, blown with their exertions, they came back to the bridle path to find her patiently waiting with Poganuc stiff as a statue by her side, "and how far it might be."

"And you told them?" cried Kellond, feverishly, and passing an unsteady hand over his hot brow.

"In truth, I did," said Marcia, with calm eyes for him. "Why should I not? The Colonies are ever gentle and hospitable to strangers."

"Of course — of course," said Kellond, hastily. "Well, and did they take thy direction?"

"They did that," said Marcia, with many prayers heavenward for the lie. "Oh, if I had but known

to whom I was talking, and could earlier have served my King!"

"And the old villain, did he appear able for such a journey?" asked Kirk. Now that the two fugitives were but a few hours before them on the route they must take as soon as they could regain the horses they had left on the edge of the town to descend without warning on the "Sperry Farm," they could afford to spend a few moments in getting every detail.

"He seemed not so old as thou wouldst have me think," replied Marcia, her blue eyes opened in innocent surprise. "His speech was quick and hearty; I remember he said, 'Son, we must hasten and cover many miles ere the sun sets.'"

"Now, by my soul, we must to horse!" exclaimed Kellond, nervously, striding off. Kirk took a step toward Marcia. The statue-like figure became instinct with life, and Poganuc was close at the girl's side.

"I only want to say," began Kirk, "before we go, that we shall never forget your loyalty. Mark me, pretty maiden, you shall come in for a share of the reward when this night's work is completed," and he sprang after his companion.

"Reward!" Marcia's tone was shrill and high after them, till it even chilled Kirk's vertebræ and set Kellond into a lively run. "I want only the commendation of my King!" Then amidst the

profound silence that ensued she turned limply to the Indian.

"I am faint, Poganuc," she said wearily, stretching out her hands.

The Indian seized her in his powerful arms as if she had been a baby, and lightly traversing the bridle path with the speed of a deer, he soon reached the edge of the forest. It was then but an easy matter to gain the farm-house, and give the unconscious form of the girl into Farmer Sperry's keeping. Dame Sperry had gone to bed in tears, sent there by her spouse, who waited in the houseplace for Marcia's home-coming.

"Now, may God reward thee," was the prayer ejaculated in the stuffy loft above, "for this night's work. More of such, and Liberty would breathe triumphant from all her enemies."

"Marcia, girl," her Uncle Sperry was whispering in her ear, "thou hast the stuff that heroes are made of, and art like to thy father." For the first time in her life, he pressed a kiss upon her cheek. Marcia sat straight and put a dazed hand to her head. Then she put her face up to the one working with emotion above her. "Oh, Uncle Sperry, have I saved him — and the other?" she cried convulsively.

"Thou hast, I verily believe," declared Farmer Sperry, solemnly; "but hark ye, Marcia, heroes' work must have no undoing by womanish tears.

Do thou get thee to thy room, for Will Hepburn will speedily return. He is distraught, as thou knowest, by thine actions, and because I allowed thee to go with the strangers. Be quick, so that I can tell him thou art safe and at rest."

It was none too soon. Will's horse, on which he had set a pillion for Lucy, was heard clattering perilously near the houseplace. The two had met the man-servant sent by Madam Jones when half-way to the market-place, it is true, but Lucy perversely refused to alight and make the change in escorts, declaring she was nearly dead of fright, and it would be cruel to distress her further. So Will, chafing at the delay, was obliged to humor the spoiled little beauty, although he scolded her like a child, which she minded not a pin-head. To make up for this hindrance, he put spurs to his horse after leaving the Jones mansion, and wild with fear for Marcia's safety, and an unexplainable confusion at his heart at Farmer Sperry's attitude, he lost no moments in reaching the farm.

Marcia gained her feet, all weakness gone, and sped through the farmhouse kitchen and up to the little room she called her own. "And is she safe?" she heard Will's hoarse cry ere he alighted from his horse.

"Ay, ay," was Farmer Sperry's voice, tranquil and sure, "and safe in bed and asleep by this time." God and the white angel of truth forgive,

we beg, when two lives hang trembling in the balance. The two Judges, just above the young man's head, retreated from the dingy, cobwebbed window, and, reprieved for God only knows how long, threw themselves down on a bundle of grain-bags in the corner.

And William Jones, under cover of the night, and through devious turnings and windings, was finally reaching his mansion. His part in the rescue of the fugitives from their wanderings in the forest, and their committal into the hands of honest Farmer Sperry, is not to be detailed here. So sleep for those who were unhaunted by anxious forebodings folded the goodly town of New Haven in her wings. The minister's vigils, however, were upon his knees; not for himself did he beseech the Lord that night. The sole burden of his cry was, "Oh, righteous God and defender of mankind, save these Thy servants from despair and cruel death; and bring to naught all schemes to pursue and overthrow them, and make us in this Colony, which Thou hast planted, instruments of Thine to assist to a secure haven these Thine unhappy and persecuted servants."

But Kellond and Kirk, those two zealous young servants of a king, though more alert still for their own aggrandizement, rushed on and on through the night toward Manhattan, unwilling to give up such a good clew, yet ever and anon wondering

why they overtook not the fugitives. At last, concluding that some passing horseman had generously given the tired pedestrians a lift on their journey, the pursuers dug their spurs without mercy into their beasts. Meanwhile, up in the dusty loft, so many long months unopened, the two hounded men slept on the pile of grain-bags, with God's peace on their faces, and His promises hid in their hearts.

XIII

THE road to Milford was soon traversed, despite exploring every adjacent bush and tree that might be supposed to conceal the lurking fugitives, and Kellond and Kirk spurred on to Fairfield. Not a living soul, even an Indian, had they met to make inquiries of the hunted men; but hope inspired their breasts at the positive assurance that echoed from Marcia's lips. "What a loyalist is that!" cried Kirk over and over during that mad ride.

"But uncanny as the grave," shivered Kellond, although the night was warm; and glancing over his shoulder, "methinks I see her white gown amid those trees yonder."

"Ha, ha! thou art bewitched," laughed Kirk.

"I believe you," muttered Kellond; "and if this infernal business be not ended soon, I answer not for my wits."

"Cheer up, and put spurs to thy spirit," advised Kirk; "we shall soon trap the villains—and then!"

Yes, and then! Saying which, and repeating it oft, they at last drew rein suddenly. Before them lay the Ousatonic, shimmering in the early morning twilight.

Kellond cast his sharp, bird-like eyes about for an Indian camp. Some one must ferry them across; that was evident. "As for the horses, I suppose they must swim for it," he growled. Ha! a puff of smoke a short distance to the right proclaimed a wigwam.

"Here, you whelps," prefacing his address by uncomplimentary adjectives, he shouted in that direction, "ferry us across. Pray Heaven they may be friendly," he muttered, his hand on his pistol.

"Said they not so in New Haven Town?" queried Kirk.

"'Said they not so?'" mimicked the other, "ay, of a truth; but it sticks in my crop to trust a psalm-singer who allows the melody to escape through his nose. Thou art a credulous dog; and wilt believe everything given thee."

"Mayhap I'll arrive at as good result as a halting devil who trusts none but his own addled wits," retorted Kirk, in a spleen.

Kellond was already charging his horse toward the Indian camp. Half way there, the animal shied at a long, disjointed figure sitting on a stone, preparing a bow and arrows evidently for some hunting expedition. He presented a curious spectacle from under his old skin cap, as he looked up; and although he had high cheek bones and a somewhat tawny skin, that was more perhaps

the result of slight acquaintance with water than from racial distinction, his eyes were blue, and his address, when he condescended to speak, decidedly without the Indian tongue.

"Do you understand, you lout," hurled Kellond at him, giving his beast a cut across the flank for the start, "that we need your services to ferry us across the river?"

"I understand," said the man, laying down bow and arrows on the ground with great deliberation. When he straightened himself, and shook out his long arms and legs, he was a sight; and the two young Englishmen looked up to him, envious of his extra length; a little of which would have gone a good way with either of them.

"Hurry, and get your canoe," urged Kellond, crossly. "That hulk of yours be blasted. Our business is most urgent. Saw you aught of two strangers passing this way?" he asked suddenly, and bringing his sharp eyes to bear on the long man's face.

Waiting to adjust his bow and arrows to his satisfaction on the ground before he answered, the other replied slowly, "How looked they?" and gave as keen a glance in return.

"What is that to thee?" cried Kellond, sore from the independent colonial ways of yesterday; "I asked thee didst see two men? Canst give a direct answer, lout?"

The long man preferred to give none at all, but observed greater leisure with every step toward the bank of the river, where in a gully well concealed by undergrowth a canoe lay drawn up. Kellond now thought it better to propitiate one so necessary to their progress, and so broke out confidentially, "The two Regicides are the ones whom I seek, I and my companion." He pointed to Kirk, who had dismounted on seeing the success of the quest for a ferryman and was now indulging in a long and restful roll on the fresh spring grass. His horse, released from the pressure on the saddle, was cropping with much enjoyment what herbage came within his reach.

"Who be they?" asked the man without turning his head, as Kellond and his horse followed slowly.

"The murderers of our good King, the father of his gracious Majesty, King Charles the Second," replied Kellond.

"Oh!" It was impossible to tell whether stupidity was master, or what controlled the man, and as Kellond reflected, it was of small moment. What they required of the long, uncouth fellow was to manage the canoe. So the young English trader restrained his impatience and, longing to follow Kirk's example, watched the slow preparations to embark.

At last there was no further occasion for delay,

and the three men were in the canoe. "Will the horses follow, or must they be led?" asked Kirk, anxiously.

"They'll follow," said the long man, curtly — and indeed they did, as far as midstream. When that point was reached, he looked back suddenly. "Well, I declare to gracious" — the rest of the exclamation was lost. Kellond and Kirk never to their satisfaction could tell how it occurred; but the fact of their being precipitated into the river was certain, and certain too that they were all floundering about.

"Now by my soul," spluttered Kellond, bobbing about like an uneasy fish at end of a hook, "thou shalt pay dearly for this scurvy trick." Kirk had shipped so much water that he saved speech for further occasion. The long man seemed not to be put out by the plainness of this speech yelled over the face of the water, but called out serenely, "Hold on there, I'll help ye as soon 's I git the c'noe right side up" — a task he was so long about that his two passengers must have drowned had the river been deep enough, and had they known not how to swim. But neither of these predicaments happened to be their fate, so in course of time they scrambled up the opposite bank, their fine clothes soaking, and their tempers very bad indeed.

"Oh, how we'll make you pay for this, you low-

down hound," shrieked Kellond; while Kirk willingly joined in a worse tirade, as the two danced up and down the greensward that received them, and shook as much water from their garments as they could.

"Oh, you're safe," ejaculated the long man, having now the object of his solicitude right side up. Slipping into the canoe, he paddled along slowly, but made no perceptible progress toward their shore. "I was just a-comin' to pick ye up," he added with great concern over cheek and brow.

"Oh, you villain!" screamed Kellond, shaking both fists at him.

"If we ever catch you, my fine friend," cried Kirk, quite gone when he saw the wreck of his clothes, "why, we'll flay you alive, and then broil your bones."

"Blamed cu'rus how the tarnal critter got upset," observed the man in the canoe, perplexedly, resting from his labors to propel her.

"Shut your mouth," roared Kellond at him. "You upset us on purpose, you hound; you know you did. Now lead us our horses," — he pointed his angry fingers to the two steeds, making little progress toward their destination, but apparently floating down stream.

"Be ye wet?" asked the ferryman, suddenly, and as if the idea had just occurred to him.

"*Wet!*" it was impossible to describe the tem-

per into which this question threw the young Englishmen. The air was positively blue around them for the space of a moment, savoring of the brimstone of their speech. When they paused, the canoe was grounding on the opposite beach, and its occupant had suddenly grown deaf; for notwithstanding all their appeals for assistance in recovering their horses, the long, uncouth man slouched back to the Indian camp, where doubtless he resumed his interrupted work on the bow and arrows. And all that remained for the two wet and discouraged young pursuers of the Judges was to run along the bank to the small harbor where a projecting series of rocks formed a curve, into which the two horses fortunately floundered.

That afternoon Mr. Jones's man-servant was seen approaching the "Sperry Farm." Marcia, stony-faced and with a defiant look painful to see in her young eyes, did not glance up from her spinning. Goodwife Sperry, glad of any change from the intolerable gloom, got out of her chair, and met the messenger in the houseplace just as he was alighting from his horse.

"It is a letter writ by Miss Lucy Leet," said the man, holding out an oblong paper, fastened by a big red wax seal, like those her father used, and Mr. Jones and other dignitaries, "and she bid me give it into Miss Marcia's own hand."

"This is just the same," observed Dame Sperry

summarily possessing herself of the missive. "I will see that Marcia gets it; and so you can tell Miss Lucy."

The man unwillingly saw her disappear with the letter within the farm-house, and turned his horse about. "Bad luck to me if Miss Lucy accepts not that excuse," he muttered to himself.

Goodwife Sperry went straight across the kitchen, and threw the letter into Marcia's lap without speaking. With a premonition of evil to come from the reading, she sat down and took up her work.

Marcia brought the busy wheel to a full stop. Her lips were set, and she trembled not, as she tore the pompous red seal off from this, her first letter. But with all her haste to nerve herself up for the contents, her progress was of necessity slow, for reading with facility the written page was then denied to most, but the schoolmaster or the minister. Even Uncle Sperry made slow work of it sometimes.

But at last she had it all, every word; and, oh, how it burnt into her soul! Goodwife Sperry was frightened when with a sudden bound Marcia was in the middle of the kitchen. "Now may Heaven forgive her," she blazed, throwing her young arms above her head, "for I never will!"

"Marcia — Marcia — for God's sake do not speak thus!" Dame Sperry was by her side.

"And who are we sinful creatures, to talk of withholding forgiveness from any offender? It is the province of our Creator to forgive or to condemn as He will. Down on your knees, girl, and ask pardon for your own soul."

But Marcia towered high. "I have not sinned, and never, never will I forgive her!"

"What said the letter?" asked Goodwife Sperry, seeing that, as she could do nothing with the girl, she might as well indulge her woman's curiosity.

"Wouldst know?" Marcia flung at her in scorn, her bosom rising and falling in angry gusts.

"Yes, indeed, and mayhap I can help thee come to reason and a better state of soul," said her aunt, with a glance at the letter on the floor where it had been flung.

"Thou needst not pick it up." Marcia made a sudden dash to the big fireplace, grasped the tongs and, springing back, nipped between their teeth Lucy's missive; then over to the crackling hickory logs.

"Marcia, Marcia, what wouldst thou do?" Dame Sperry screamed at her. But the letter was already a flaming thing; and Marcia flapped the tongs triumphantly, a corresponding gleam in her dark eyes. "I can say every word in it till the day of judgment," she said with slow bitterness. "Wouldst hear it now, aunt?" and she

thrust the tongs into their place. "'My once dear friend, Marcia Sabine,'" — Marcia could not reproduce the spelling (which is just as well for us), — "'since the dreadful time which took place last night, and which shakes me as an ague just to think of, I think it my duty to inform you that I can love you no more. I have writ this by my own hand to let you know that you need not come to Goodman Jones's house, as I entreated you before you gave up those poor men and insulted Parson Davenport who, so Goodwife Jones says, preached a most powerful discourse commanding every one to stand by them. Your most obedient servant,

"'LUCY LEET, daughter to the chief Magistrate of the Colony of New Haven.'"

A death-like silence fell upon the kitchen and its occupants. Then Goodwife Sperry moaned and looked about. Marcia was gone.

On the wings of the wind she sped, she knew not whither, the cool air brushing her cheek and fanning her heated brain. A sudden grasp brought her to a stop. It was Uncle Sperry's long arm. "Marcia!" The one word was enough. Then — "My brave girl!" and he folded her in his arms, and laid his bronzed cheek against her soft one. "Canst bear it, the part further to play?"

"Ay," said Marcia — never a word of Lucy's

letter, crueller than the grave. "Is there aught for my hands to do?" She held them out, so young and strong, and looked in her uncle's face.

"Yes, the cave is ready. Come, there is not an instant to lose." He seized her arm and together they plunged into the heart of the forest.

XIV

THE rewards freely offered by Kellond and Kirk, and hanging above the heads of all good loyalists and any Indians who might assist in the search, were doing their work; and a dangerous trail of blood-hounds eager for the gold was now on the scent for the hunted men.

Dennis Scranton was in a fine frenzy. Should he, who had given first notice, see the prize slip through his fingers for some lesser light to ferret out? So he worked early and late; his peaked face into everything that promised the slightest clew; his pricked-up ear this way and that, till it seemed as if he could detect the whispers of his neighbor's soul.

All small things were forgotten now in town; even the wonder for the past month or more as to the whereabouts of Jedediah Beetle, who hadn't been seen since he carried his white face and staring eyes away from the whipping-post. For the first fortnight after that lamentable occurrence no one thought much of the dropping out of Jed from the market-place and his accustomed haunts. He had been known to disappear for a week or so on hunt-

ing expeditions, when Goody Beetle's finger nails grew too long, and her tongue too sharp; but he always turned up, ready to forgive and forget, a pleasant grin on his face, and a brace of rabbits or wild turkeys or other small game, or perhaps a haunch of venison given by some trapper comrade, dangling at his side. And Jedediah, ever ready to do a kindness, had many friends among the Indians, and their camps were always open to him. But as week after week passed, and no Jed appeared in the town, people didn't like it, and shook their heads; and if this new excitement stirred up about the finding of the Judges had not displaced other matters from their minds, somebody would have voiced an appeal to search for the missing man, and thus ease Goody's wails, besides doing a real service to the community. For Goody Beetle, now that her spouse seemed permanently departed, mourned him most noisily, and reiterated his virtues, anathematizing the town and the Colony for the treatment he had received, with whole volumes of objurgatory stuff on her own personal account. But it was noticed that she kept at home her black cat that ofttimes before was accustomed to trail at her heels; and that her own walks abroad were frequently now enjoyed after nightfall.

Dennis Scranton couldn't keep his eyes nor ears away from "Sperry Farm," but wandered out there at all times of day and night, spying around

the premises or hoping for a chance to interview Marcia. Heavens! what a loyalist that girl was! If Kellond and Kirk had nabbed the Regicides on their way to Manhattan (and New Haven Town would not get the news in a long day unless brought in by some Indian runner), her fortune was made, likewise his, Dennis Scranton's, for directing the steps of the pursuivants to "Sperry Farm." How little he thought what a treasure the Cause would find in Marcia Sabine! She would be the first to receive the joyful tidings — "caught — arrested — on the way to punishment." So he trudged faithfully over, back and forth, but so far had not caught a sight of the girl. Ah! this Thursday morning, May 17, fortune favors him. A sudden turn in the trail leading out of the forest to the farm-house,— and when he is least expecting it, — there she is, ahead, with light foot, and unencumbered save for a basket she held in her hand.

"Hem! Marcia! Blast it, why don't the girl stop?" He sets into a slouchy pace that gets him over the ground. "I've got somethin' to say to ye."

Marcia turns not her head as he gains her side, and he falls into a dog-trot just behind her in the narrow trail. "'Tain't in reason but what you'd be proud o' your part in catchin' them infernal scoundrels."

"*Sirrah!*" she turns in the path, and a lightning gleam transfixes him with one glance of her eye.

"Oh, mercy to me," cries the discomfited Scranton, dodging it, and rubbing his hands together. "'Tain't seemly to carry yer pride so far. I helped to nab 'em, if nabbed they be, as I hope by this time's true, by those clever Englishmen; I helped to catch 'em, and don't you forget that, Marcia Sabine."

"Keep your distance," she commanded, in tones which, though low, reminded the listening man of the thunder that accompanies the lightning bolt, as she saw a small attempt to creep nearer for conversation. "Have I sunk indeed so low as to bring you here with foul aspersions on your tongue?"

"Foul aspersions?" repeated Scranton.

Marcia caught her breath, "On your tongue anything is foul," she hasted to say. "I want no praise for aught I have done for my King."

"There'll be a reward," Scranton whispered, drawing near, his little eyes twinkling avariciously. "Mr. Kellond said it would be hundreds of pounds in money, and land — oh, the best of the Colony will be granted willingly to those who furnished information that will catch the murderers." He gloated over it, letting the syllables rest on his tongue like sweet morsels.

"Talk not to me of reward," cried Marcia, hotly,

recoiling from him in shame and disgust. "I tell thee of a truth, Dennis Scranton, that he whose heart is set on a reward as the price of service, such as yours, is a foul traitor to all that befits a man. Get thee hence; I'll talk no more to thee. Do thou go thy way and I will go mine."

"Not so fast, my pretty maiden," cried Scranton, stung to the quick by her words. "And I believe, on my soul, you've got some word from those two blasted Englishmen, that they've caught the birds; reward you set so little store by in your scornful words is already in your possession. Is't so?" He made a lunge at her. In the sudden start, Marcia's basket was torn from her grasp, and fell to the moss and pine needles. At all hazards she must protect it.

"Goodman Scranton," she said in a conciliatory voice, "I see you misunderstand me."

"I only take your words," glared Scranton at her, his foot perilously near her treasure. She did not stoop to recover it, nor cast an eye in its direction, but went on calmly. "My words may be heated, for I am, as thou dost know, impulsive in my nature; moreover, I am overwrought by this prominence that my act hath brought upon me in the Colony. Thou dost know that while some praise it, more are they who have cast me off by reason of it."

"Who cares?" exclaimed Scranton with an

oath; yet he was moved, despite his words. The girl stood, a dejected figure, her arms at her sides, and her head drooping, and he added not ungently, but eagerly, "At least tell me, hast thou heard aught of them, the Regicides, and have the Englishmen caught them?"

"I know not," answered Marcia, unguardedly.

Scranton uttered another oath in sheer disappointment. "Then must the search be smarter in these quarters," he declared savagely. "By my soul, I'll drag them out. They shall not escape me!"

"Think'st thou that these clever Englishmen will neglect the clew I gave them?" asked Marcia, recovering herself, and meeting his heat by cool scorn; "surely thou settest a light value indeed on their nimbleness of wit" — and she laughed a low, quiet gurgle that completely disarmed Scranton of his irritation. "They cannot go amiss; as for me, *I* trust them," she added, with sufficient emphasis on the pronoun to deal a rebuke.

Scranton felt it, and hastened to assure her over and over that he also held implicit confidence in their ability and shrewdness, as well as in the clew furnished them by Marcia Sabine. Seeing this state of mind in him, which was precisely what she aimed at, Marcia fetched a yawn, declared that Aunt Sperry would never forgive her if she were home much later, and essayed to pick up her basket.

"But you were going in the opposite direction from home when I first saw you," observed Scranton, innocently enough, it is true, but setting her into a smart panic.

"Surely, I have a habit of pacing back and forth when thinking deeply," she said, with a girlish giggle, "and aunt has been so troublous to me, since I did my duty to my King. You can't think, Goodman Scranton," she cried, like a sorrowing child, her dark eyes soft and pleading, "how she looks at me, and torments me with her tongue."

"She'll sing a different tune," cried Scranton, coarsely, "when your hands are full of the shining gold, Marcia, I say," and now he laughed and displayed his yellow teeth; "it will be no small value of the reward that I can buy out, three times over, the mean, low-down, snivelling set of men who manage this Colony. Curse 'em! Dennis Scranton will be even with 'em in that fine day."

He was so elated that Marcia, choosing this instant, picked up her basket, and hanging it carelessly on her arm, started for the farm.

"Take my advice, Dennis Scranton," she called after him, as she stepped off slowly, "and think not so much of the reward as of the service. But remember most of all to trust his gracious Majesty's servants, those well-equipped young Englishmen." Then she went on her way.

Just beyond the wood, and listening a minute,

her heart in her throat, she paused; all was well. The silence of the grave was around her. But suddenly, as if from that last receptacle for worn-out mankind, a figure, long and uncouth, stepped from behind a tree, and stood before her.

"Jed," — she held out her arms and the basket, — "he has gone — the scoundrel — but just now he met me in the wood. I have put him off the track — but, O God, for how long!" She stopped exhausted, her breath coming and going in fitful gusts.

"That dog, Scranton?" asked the man, coolly. "I take it, Marcia, you mean him."

"Yes, and thou must entrap him, Jed, thou must hinder and embarrass him, and dog his steps everywhere he goes, else he will surely work mischief to our plans; for his heart is set on the gold — the price of blood — to be paid him, if he finds them."

"I can't go after the skunk myself," said the man, a queer look passing swiftly over his face, "for I've sworn to God never to set foot in New Haven Town again."

"Oh, Jed, dear Jedediah Beetle," pleaded the girl, clasping her hands, "forget that vow. Think of the good you can do now to those unhappy men!"

But Jed shook his head. "An' besides I can take care of skunks an' snakes an' sech better in the woods maybe," he said. "And I know them

as can dog 'em anough sight smarter 'n I can, so I'll jest set some of the Injuns I'm with at the job. Don't fear, Marcia." And the kindly look stole into the eyes that had been bitter and staring.

"Jed," she cried, in a voice stifled in tears that could not be shed as she thrust the basket by a sudden movement into his hand, "thou must take this to the cave, for they have had nothing this day. I have waited long for the chance, and only obtained it to be frustrated by that man."

Jed nodded his big head, and seized the basket with his brawny hand.

"And do thou give them — those two poor hunted men — my best wishes and blessing," said Marcia, a rose in her cheek now. "Sometimes the Lord blesses poor words, and makes the feeblest instruments a means of encouragement."

Jed nodded again, and waited for further commands. "Why art thou not moving?" said Marcia, petulantly. "Hurry, dear Jed, their strength needs to be kept up by food. Oh, and dear Jed, be sure to comfort their hearts by all that thou canst think of as sympathy, and request that they tell thee if they require aught that I might add in to-morrow's portion. I have put some cordial in a bottle for the dear old man."

Jed nodded again stupidly, but his eyes were alight, and his grasp on the basket steady. Sud-

denly a report from a rifle rang out through the forest.

"Oh, Jed, Jed!" cried Marcia, in white-faced terror, clinging to his arm; "they are discovered — Scranton has found them."

Jed set the basket down. It may be the hungry men were beyond the need of food — or worse still, alive, and in the hands of their captors. He plunged into the thick of the forest, his long figure breaking its own path with a mighty crackling of the undergrowth. Marcia, well knowing that her presence where she longed to be, in his wake, would but increase the danger of the pursuit, concealed her basket of provisions and fled to acquaint Farmer Sperry with the meeting with Scranton that might explain the rifle-shot, for she heard but one.

Nevertheless where Scranton was, there would likely be other villains; and her heart sickened with a mortal fear for the men whom she was giving more than her life to save.

Jed tore through the forest like a madman, with the instinct of a backwoodsman, hitting the right mark where the shot rang. On he dashed, and suddenly ran almost into the arms of a man who, on seeing him, evinced a disposition to make himself as scarce as possible, flattening his body against a tree-trunk.

"Jedediah Beetle!" gasped this man, "for the

Lord's sake, what ye doin' here?" This was wrung out of him in his surprise at the New Haven man's sudden appearance, although it was by no means the uppermost topic in his mind.

Jed looked at him blankly. "Did you fire that rifle?" he asked, with no hint of former acquaintance.

Scranton gave an uneasy laugh. "Yes, I did, Jed," he said, trying to make light of it. Then he added, in a sudden confidential burst, "Come; I'll go halves with you. I've seen one of the Regicides! This way, and we'll capture 'em, Jed." He grasped his rifle, which still smoked, and started forward. In some way, Jed's windmill legs were in the way, and so inextricably mixed with Scranton's shorter ones that the smaller man went to the ground, with a thud not pleasant to hear. "Whoever ye may be," — and Jed's tone held no note of acquaintanceship as he twitched out of a handy pocket a stout leathern thong which he proceeded to bind about the aforesaid limbs of the prostrate figure, — "I'll teach ye it's onhealthy to go a-shootin' promiscus like through the woods. Don't ye know 'twas me ye saw, ye fool ye!" — tying each knot as special emphasis to his wrath, — "an' ye come nigh to lettin' daylight through my skin?"

Scranton looked up, paralyzed with fear. Jed really didn't know him. "Oh, I'm here all alone

with a man who's lost his wits," he groaned, a calamity beyond his wildest terrors. "Oh, mercy me, he'll kill me; there's murder in his eye! Help! help!" he grovelled all along the pine needles, forgetful that this primeval wilderness left few chances for the human voice to pierce the ear of any rescuer.

Jed took care there were no second howls, as the wad he tore from Scranton's doublet and rammed into his generous mouth precluded all danger from that source.

"Now then, whoever ye be, ye're goin' with me; ye're a menace an' a danger to folks as hev to pass through these ere woods." And he lifted with apparent ease the body so nicely tied up, and swung it over his shoulder. The wretched Scranton, feeling sure with every step that he was going to the doom prepared by a wild-eyed maniac whom he had once known as Jedediah Beetle, now closed his wildly rolling eyes and tried to pray, as his captor slouched along with him. All the gold in the kingdom of England, all the land-grants of the United Colonies, were as dust and ashes to his soul now; and a merciful unconsciousness took him at this point and saved him from all knowledge of the outside world.

XV

JED bore him along through the forest, shifting him occasionally with no more careful hand than if a bag of corn had been his burden; and presently struck into a deeper wilderness, if that were possible, following the smoke tints against the sky that betokened the Indian camps of Amity. "An' it'll be a considerable spell, my fine friend," — he addressed the unconscious heap across his shoulders, — "before they'll part company with ye. So no more huntin' for the Judges from ye, jest this week."

A few more strides, manfully put forth, for his burden pressed him sore about this time, and the veins on his neck stood out like whipcords, and Jed flings down the heap before the wigwam of the chief of the tribe.

"Ugh — ugh!" the chief was smoking his pipe, and although no other sound came from his lips, and not a shade of expression passed across his face, Jed knew that he was devoured with curiosity to know what he was expected to do with it.

"Mean, or'nary skunk," said Jed, touching it with his foot, and then, retreating to a little dis-

tance to set his back against a tree to rest his aching shoulders, he twisted up his face into extraordinary grimaces that could not possibly be translated into affection for the object, concluding by pointing to it and then spitting upon the ground.

The chief nodded, still with no change of expression.

"What do?—kill?" he asked at length, not removing his pipe.

"No," Jed shook his head. "Not worth powder and ball, or to spile th' edge o' yer tom'hawk; jest ornary." Again he spat. "Keep him tied." Jed went through all the motions of fastening a man up to a tree, then he as deftly untied him again, and put an imaginary hoe in his hand and bent his back obediently to the call of labor—a thing of which he had only the slenderest experience, but he could picture it wonderfully well.

The chief nodded again. He knew perfectly what was expected of him now. The heap was a prisoner of war, so to speak; and his good kind friend, he of the long, uncouth body, of whom his tribe had seen so much since his residence with the camps at Fairfield, desired him to keep the prisoner carefully, to feed him and to set him to work, above all to watch him, lynx-eyed and sure, lest he escape.

"Now, thou art a good soul," exclaimed Jed, joyfully, and he clapped the chief familiarly on the

back; a liberty that, strange to say, was not in the least resented.

"I must get Mrs. Injun to throw some water on the varmint," said Jed, when this point was reached in the negotiations, "and get him to open his eyes, for I don't want a dead skunk on my hands; then I'll make myself scarce."

Friday, May 17, the next day, was set apart for the meeting of the General Court for the jurisdiction appointed on the Monday preceding. New Haven Town was thronged. Before it convened, Deputy Governor Leet and some of the Magistrates were closeted with Pastor John Davenport in his big study.

There they sat, that body of men grave and devout, with a peril they cared not to think of threatening them, if they swerved ever so much from the wise course. The sharp sword of royal vengeance hung conspicuously over the serenest of them all, who opened conversation.

"One thing is certain, that alone the Lord approveth: these patriots must be saved." They were glad that Pastor Davenport's voice broke the stillness, for it was becoming painful, each man at a loss what to say; yet his words brought only disquieting thoughts.

"Assuredly," Deputy Governor Leet said, abruptly, "if by saving them, we do not endanger the Colony."

"What was our Colony founded for, I would ask thee, brother," the Rev. John Davenport's tone was a shade colder, and he gazed keenly at the flushed face of the good man at his right hand, "if not to promulgate the principles of liberty? And surely have these righteous men a claim upon us, even though we respectedst them not for themselves. For my part, I am glad to count them my friends."

Deputy Governor Leet moved uneasily and coughed behind his hand. He looked at Magistrate Robert Treat's sturdy face and figure, but that individual preserved a discreet silence. Evidently with him the thought was uppermost that the two principal dignitaries must have it out with their opinions first.

"Let us understand one another," Pastor Davenport's tone was most quiet, but it brooked no fencing on the part of the opposite party. "Matters are in such a condition at this stage in the pursuit of these servants of God that we must needs move with the greatest caution."

Every one seemed to agree with him there, to judge by the grave countenances.

"Yet it is a time to strike boldly and to preserve that independence of thought and action, without which we should never have come to these shores. Mark ye, my brethren, I look down the years; and although those who come after us will be tried,

and that sorely, it is by this independence and God's grace that they will emerge from their trials, victorious through them all."

They looked at him as if they had seen one of the prophets of old, and verily his face did shine like unto them; and his eyes were luminous and soft.

"There is a time when another course than an independent one serveth better," Deputy Governor Leet observed dryly, after the silence, "and we cannot always manage political affairs under the shadow of the Church." This was throwing down the gauntlet in great shape!

"Can we not so?" cried the minister in holy wrath, his soft eyes turning dark, a piercing gleam shooting from their depths. "All that holds our Colony together is the indissoluble union of Church and State. And all questions of future policy, whether it be in the smallest or the greatest affairs of State, must be brought to the final tribunal of the Church for settlement. 'What saith the Lord?' must decide each matter as it comes up."

Deputy Governor Leet fidgeted in his chair as if desirous of saying more; but Magistrate Treat at this moment asked, "You would thus decide this matter pertaining to the Judges, and our duty in regard to their pursuit and capture, just as all other concernments might be settled, by what the Church should lay down as a command to us? Dost not thou mean that, Pastor Davenport?"

"Most certainly I do," declared Parson Davenport, firmly, "and until I can read my Bible as pitting the hand of man against the wanderer and outcast, I must continue to obey the voice of God that tells me to interpose, and to lead to security and to a haven of rest the oppressed of His people."

The apartment was very still. "Not one of us know aught of the Judges at present, nor where they lodge." Jasper Crane of Milford broke the silence. "And this can be said with truth at the General Court; more, we do not believe them within our jurisdiction, for I honestly think the two men either at Manhattan or on the way there, to fall a prey to the Englishmen pursuing them on information of the maiden Marcia Sabine."

A spasm of pain shot athwart the minister's face; but he controlled it instantly.

"And so it seems to me wise and expedient," said Robert Treat, the Milford Magistrate, as Magistrate Crane seemed to come to the end of his remarks, "that any warrant to search the houses in this town and Colony that the General Court may issue for further search, after the careful one that the Deputy Governor set in motion these past few days, can do no harm, and it will strengthen our Colony with the mother country. This is important at this critical time."

Rev. John Davenport was silent, knowing Brother Treat's remarks to carry only truth and

the soundest of wisdom; but he sighed and hid his face within his long and slender fingers.

"The letter from his Majesty and that of the Governor of Massachusetts must be answered," said Deputy Governor Leet. "I sent an account of these letters to Magistrate Gilbert, who, by the way, was at that time away from home; then appointed a meeting of the Court of Magistracy for Monday last, as you know. And as the question involved was so serious, it behooved us, and it behooves us still, to observe all the proper technicalities; but after all, we must decide upon the course of our action, for act now we must."

Still the minister was silent, his head sunken upon his breast in the anguish of that moment, so pregnant of good or evil for not alone the two Judges, but for all the souls in the Colony.

"Let us pray." He sank to his knees, his action followed by every man present.

"God of our fathers and of the universe, Creator of every living creature, by the breath of Thy mouth are we brought forth. Thou canst raise up, and Thou canst destroy. Descend now and give us audience, we beseech of Thee, at this critical moment in the life of our beloved Colony. Thou knowest, O God, the spirit in which we left all and followed Thee into this wilderness which Thou hast planted; and which yet, we believe, shall blossom as the rose. In our hands was Holy

Writ, the sacred Book of Thy commands, and by its precepts we have followed and will ever follow the path leading, we trust, to civil and to religious liberty.

"And now Thou hast sent to our shores, commending we believe their hunted bodies to our care, these poor persecuted servants of Thine who obeyed the dictates of their consciences and struck for that civil and religious liberty which is, we believe, the foundation of the nation that builds with the blessing of God. Teach us by Thy counsels, we beseech of Thee, O God, at this time, and show us plainly, so that we may not err, what Thou wouldst have us do. Then may we follow out Thy will though we walk like Thy servant of old, through a fiery furnace to its completion. For the sake of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, we humbly present our petition. Amen."

Deputy Governor Leet resumed his chair, as if indeed the sway of the Church was still over the State, and he feeling its shadow. But he still looked perplexed. As for the face of the minister, it was radiant in its holy calm, but the lightning gleam followed.

"All the same," declared the Deputy Governor, "no matter how carefully we conduct ourselves at the General Court, and how skilfully we steer clear of difficulties, there will be a reckoning to come with those who harbor, henceforth, these two

men. Pastor Davenport, you are already a marked man. I pray you have a care; if thou heedest not for thyself, remember the Colony, and hold thyself in the background in this matter, even if the lives of the Judges are the forfeit. What are two men in the balance with thy welfare and the welfare of the Colony?"

"The Colony I ever hold precious. Allow me to serve it in my own way, Brother Leet," said Parson Davenport in clear tones of dignity and reproach; then his anger flamed. "I will never desert the Judges on my own poor account, and that thou knowest, Deputy Governor Leet."

The rattle of the drum, calling the members of the General Court of Jurisdiction together, now sounded from before the meeting-house door, and the Deputy Governor and his Magistrates gathered up their papers and filed out, first pressing the hand of Pastor Davenport, who smiled a benediction upon them, as of men who, he felt assured, would do their duty to God and man.

XVI

DENNIS SCRANTON had been nervously flitting hither and yon for these weeks past, under the excitement of the gold and land-grant reward that raged within his brain, so that no one thought to miss him at Guilford when he turned not up within a few days.

"Surely, he is in New Haven Town," said his friends, — and there were not many who craved a sight of his face again, — "for he haunts the place; methinks he has a clew to the Judges, for he sticks to that locality like the nose of a ferret to a rat." So he abode at the Amity Camp, compelled to do the bidding of the squaws; the hunters would have none of him, and much to his humiliation and disgust relegated him to the women of the tribe, who found him useful in the gathering of wood, and, when there were no more tasks to do, in the watching of the caldron over the fire lest the ill-smelling messes within should burn. Only one toothless hag — the grandam, too old and clumsy for the companionship of the younger workers — looked pityingly at him, as she sat by the fire, her pipe between her gums, and once she

loosed his bonds, when no one was by, so that the leathern thongs gave longer tethering.

"Give me the freedom outside the rope's end," he whispered to her eagerly, "and I will repay you gold pressed into your lap more than you could hold."

She understood him somehow more by his gestures than by his speech, but she shook her seamed face with its watery black eyes. "Me fraid," she said.

"Of what are you afraid?" he cried scornfully.

"The white man."

"The one who brought me?" He foamed at the mouth in rage.

The old squaw nodded and took three puffs at her pipe.

"And why? Hark ye, old hag," Scranton knew that she understood not the word; and indeed it might have been the sweetest endearment possible, for she smiled — a dreadful thing to see when her lips parted. But she only nodded again, like a mandarin.

"Do you know that the fellow whom you mean stole me; yes, stole me, and has brought me a captive here? He is a lazy good-for-naught in yonder town," — he pointed to New Haven, — "and they have whipped him at the post, after cooling his heels in the public stocks. A pretty man to be afraid of! More cause has he to fear,

when I carry the story home how he has mistreated me, a citizen of Guilford." He brought out these sentences in a disjointed way, striking his hands together in anguish, that he knew not the Indian tongue even enough to make her who dimly comprehended his pleading, get the sense of his words. But she had caught something of them.

"He good — white man save chief once. White man all good. Love white man."

Scranton ground his teeth together.

To be outwitted by this man, and at this moment! "Infamous!" he muttered, "the scoundrel has in his keeping, I verily believe, the hiding-place of the Regicides, and he would keep me here all these precious days." He seized the leathern thong that bound him to the fireside where his present task held him, and shook it fiercely. At any other time, at least when working in the patches of ground the Indians sought to cultivate, or when gathering fagots, a lazy brave would hold the other end of the restraining supple yet tough leather, forcing him to proceed in the work while his captor leisurely enjoyed his pipe and the soft, spring air.

But the leather, as we have said, was tough; so Scranton, in an inward tumult of rage and humiliation, was forced to quiet his nerves on the surface, especially as the old grandam was alert now, and looked up with a glance at the wigwam outlet, as

if on thoughts intent to summon aid. He therefore assumed a nonchalant air, and contented himself with vowing vengeance inwardly on Jed's head when the happy moment should arrive to bring it within his power. And the remainder of the day he so carried himself as to disarm all suspicions.

That night, in the dead sleep that comes to one just after midnight, when earth and sky are at their stillest, he was suddenly aroused by the sound of voices over his head.

"It's time, as you say, to carry the varmint on." It was Jed who spoke. Strange as it may appear, the Indians seemed to understand his every utterance, and they now grunted in a pleased way.

"I don't wonder you don't want him; but you needn't be a mite afraid that havin' him will get ye into trouble. I'll take that all on myself." Wonderfully important had Beetle become all of a sudden, and Scranton ground his teeth together in the darkness as he realized it. The fellow actually seemed to have some unseen power over them all, not excepting the chief, who, although a fat and lazy creature enough, still brooked no semblance to insubordination in his tribe. Scranton lost himself in wondering how this all had come about, and was recalled to the present situation by hearing Jed say in a tone of command, "Tie that blanket over his head, and lift the fellow up to the horse."

A dirty blanket was then thrown over his head and securely fastened around his neck, leaving but a hole for mouth and nostrils. Then he was lifted up to the back of a horse, and strapped on in a position not exactly of the highest comfort.

Off they went; how many or few were in the party Scranton, of course, had no means of knowing. He only felt Jed's influence and presence as head of the expedition, besides occasionally catching a syllable, or a long-drawn-out word from his tongue; and as he was more interested in his destination than the method of his journey thither, he racked his brains to think where Beetle would be likely to carry him. But, try as he would, nothing came to him as a feasible solution to the problem, and by this time he gave it up, to concentrate his entire attention on his physical discomfort. This, by now, was not inconsiderable, the result of remaining so long in one position; and most especially owing to the bare bones of the stiff horse, who might have been, in reality, a wooden animal from the sensation his joints caused the prisoner, except that his constant and uneven jolts did away with any such impression. In truth, the beast seemed so erratic as never to be quite certain, until the last instant for decision arrived, where he should next plant his feet. The consequence was that they appeared to the uneasy man bound upon his

back to be here, there, and everywhere upon the wood or bridle path, or adjacent ruts of grass. When the horse was whipped up, as at fitful periods happened, by a cut behind or across his legs, he executed such a fierce start as a wooden puppet might, when animated by an energetic hand, to subside partially into a series of violent contortions of each separate and distinct muscle and ligament, till Scranton prayed Heaven for the end, only to stop; where, he cared not.

It was a long journey, only pausing for an occasional short rest, when he was lifted from the horse and set on the ground, and dirty hands thrust into his mouth food that was nauseating, though he dared not refuse, to be washed down by a drink of water, brought, he knew by the sound, from some near-by brook. Then he would be raised again and fastened to the "barebones," and they would proceed on the journey. At its end, he was taken off more dead than alive from the beast of burden, and dumped unceremoniously upon the ground; his blanket removed, and a trencher containing an ill-smelling mess, and a cup of water set by his side, to neither of which would he pay attention.

Jed then motioned the Indians to withdraw, which they did, silently leading their "pony" with them; while he seated himself on a big stone opposite the man he had been at such pains to convey

thither, and picking up a pine stick, he opened his big clasp knife and fell to whittling.

"Wall, I guess ye think it's about time I opened up talk, and communicated my plan consarnin' ye," he said coolly.

"Ye're an infamous rascal," cried Scranton, in smothered wrath, his little eyes gleaming in hate; "and when I get out, won't I have the law over ye." He actually gloated over it, forgetting the ache in his bones.

"When ye git th' law on me ye'll catch a weasel asleep," said Jed. Then his face darkened. "I've had what was called law served on me once, and they never'll take me alive to try it again. No, Scranton, I've sworn never to set foot again in New Haven Town; and as for any man ketchin' me outside," — he swept a glance on the wilderness, and laughed harshly, — "well, I'm willin' ye should set there an' plan what ye'll do to Jed Beetle. It's divertin' to your mind, so keep at it, and let me tell you what 'tis." He put his pine stick on his knee, and pointed his big knife at Scranton.

"Don't kill me, Jed!" he screamed, huddling down to the ground and as far away as he could from the staring eyes. "Oh, Lord, he's as mad as a March hare!" he thought in his agony. "I don't mean to do anythin' to ye. I don't — I only was a-jestin'."

"See here, you mis'rable cuss," ejaculated Beetle, losing his temper, but still keeping the knife in position, "I wouldn't touch yer dirty skin for all th' gold in God's universe; but I want to impress it on ye pretty deep and lively that there air some folks who wouldn't have that feelin' agin it. Ye say one word, when I've got through with ye an' let ye out o' here, agin these Indians, or t'other Indians, where ye was away back," — he pointed a square dingy thumb vaguely over his shoulder, — "an' they'll know it — *mark ye, they'll know it!*" He jabbed his knife for every word at the man before him, who dug his nails into the ground in a terror that crept speedily to his white face and wide eyes. "Lord! how your scalp will fly; an' some fine day ye'll be run across in the woods, with your toes an' yer nose to God's heaven, an' an arrow in your heart!"

It was impossible to have a worse fright seize a poor wretch than that now possessing Scranton, who shook like an aspen leaf; he would have covered his eyes, but that for the life of him, he couldn't withdraw them from the knife. When Beetle saw the effect of his warning, he laughed in his sleeve, though he sat like a Nemesis on his stone.

"Don't let them," pleaded the miserable Scranton, grovelling low, as Jed fell to work again on the pine stick with redoubled energy. "Good Jed, don't let them; I've always liked you, Jed," he

wheedled, "an' we've known each other from boys, ye know."

"Yes," said Jed, as if the honor hadn't been great, "an' I can't say it fills me with joy to bustin', thet I hev had that priv'lege. Ye was always a sneak, Dennis Scranton."

"An' now for old acquaintance' sake ye won't turn against me?" whined Scranton.

"Shut up," commanded Jed, "and stop yer drivel. I've told ye; ye do as I advise ye, an' ye're all right. Ye don't; an' th' Indians 'll tend to yer case."

Never a word all this time about the Judges, the subject uppermost in the minds of both men. Scranton, fully believing that Jed was crazed by his degradation, wouldn't have mentioned it for worlds, expecting to be run through the next moment; while a word concerning the two hunted patriots was the furthest removed from Jed's intentions, his aim being to keep Scranton from imagining that on their account was he to be kept a prisoner for a time.

"He thinks I'm crazy an' it's a freak on my part," he said to himself with a grin, "so I'll accommodate him with a few extra antics." Thereupon he got up: "Well, seein' as you an' I understand each other now, Scranton," he observed, "ye can go to sleep, an' I'll walk about a bit an' stretch my legs."

But Scranton could not close his eyes, for the figure now in the bushes just beyond began to dance, at first slowly, then at a wild and erratic pace — all the time crooning a weird medley that ran up and down the spine of the listening man, and twitched at each nerve. And to vary these interesting proceedings, Jed occasionally threw up his long, uncouth arms and apostrophized the sky, till Scranton's hair became a bush, with each capillary also pointing heavenward. Indians might come now, and the torture of fear attending would be light.

"Gosh, but I'm tired amusin' th' fool," said Jed to himself, with a sigh. He put his finger to his mouth and blew a long, low note. Instantly the whole tribe of dusky figures seemed to be about them. At the command of Jed, they took Scranton up and carried him to the camp — a matter of one hundred rods away. Then putting a guard on each side, with tomahawk at his head, they all lay down on the pine needles, Scranton well fastened in the circle, on whose utter edge lay Jed, his long sinewy limbs stretched in a well-earned rest.

It was in the early hours of the morning, before nature holds up to a weary world wrapped in slumber her summons to be witness to the dawn of a new day. Jed and his good friends, the Indians, were in a profound sleep, that led them deeper

and deeper into that dreamless unconsciousness that enfolds the innocent heart. Even Scranton had lost himself in temporary forgetfulness of his surroundings. The forest was still.

Drawing nearer, not knowing they were close to an Indian camp, were two men; yet they took stealthy steps in the forest, mindful not to tread upon the treacherous twig or tell-tale dry leaf. They confined themselves to whispers when they desired to communicate with each other, every minute unconsciously approaching the sleeping circle with the bound man in the midst between two Indians, each with a tomahawk above his head. When they did come upon it, the disclosure was so sudden, that their surprise nearly cost them dear. But the tall, swarthy man gripped his companion's arm. "I'll kill you, Crowne," he muttered, "an' you show the white liver now!"

This saved them. Crowne, who was tumbling backward, and betaking himself to a desperate flight, thought better of it, gathered up what courage he could muster on such short notice, then waited to follow his leader. The big, swarthy man looked around cautiously behind his tree, into the little valley where lay the sleepers. "Look at the poor devil between them," he whispered. At that instant, with a prick of remembrance of his condition, never long absent from his mind, the prisoner raised his head.

"Scranton, by my soul!" exclaimed the swarthy man. "What deviltry is up?" With a smothered oath, he put his head out from behind the tree, and raised his finger to his lips.

The prisoner, with an uneasy glance around, seemed to feel an influence in the air drawing his attention; and at last, as his fearful gaze travelled the circuit, it saw peering from behind the trunk of a huge tree, the head and face of his late companion at the tap-room of the New Haven Town inn and of some few but exceedingly important private interviews thereafter. He did not start, knowing it was instant death to be discovered dealing with rescuers, and there was no need for the finger at the lip and the eye that commanded to silence in that face looking out at him from behind the tree-trunk.

"If you were not such a white-livered coward," quoth the swarthy man, with a glance at Crowne and an oath, dropping his finger when he saw that his warning was obeyed, "you should go between yon savages and release the wretch. Know you not that he can help us find the Reg'cides better than any other living soul? Quick, an' you had a spark of courage and you'd do it. The gold, man, — the gold and lands that will be ours!"

"Do it yourself, Breedon," said Crowne, sharply, and his face was ashy. "I care more for my skin than all the gold you could count."

"You are lighter than I," — Breedon measured him contemptuously as if his words might be taken in two ways,— "but as you won't do it, by my soul, I will!" He straightened up, picked out a knife from beneath his coat, set it between his teeth, and took a pistol in either hand.

"Your scalp will dangle before ten minutes are up, at some savage waist," hissed Crowne, preparing to run on the wild attempt.

"Maybe; yet I like the spice of trying for it. I must have the gold. Besides, I've met Indian devils before," said Breedon, coolly. Down on all fours he slipped, and gliding as noiselessly as the serpent of the wilderness, he rested only on the outermost edge of the circle, Crowne being off on the wings of the wind.

The prisoner's eyes were fastened in terror on Breedon, whose dark bulk was stretched prone on the ground, so still one would have supposed it a log of wood. Then Scranton shut his eyelids, fully expecting each moment to hear the alarm and feel a tomahawk at his scalp. It came so suddenly at last that he nearly expired at the touch; a hand was cutting the leathern thong; a pistol was thrust in his hand. "Follow me!" He was up, and light as a feather in his fear, he was outside the sleeping circle, and after his rescuer. One second, and the camp was in an uproar.

"This way — do not try to run further," —

Breedon dragged him to the ground, burrowing like a mole after him,—"the devils are hot in pursuit, no living man could outrun them—we will rest here a bit till they have gone; then take the other way." He pulled the bushes over the depression into which they had grovelled, until nature's network entirely enclosed them. Then under his breath, he swore to his heart's content, protesting he never had such a close shave; Scranton grovelling at his feet scarcely realizing his escape, and covering him with gratitude.

"By my soul, you sicken me," at last exclaimed Breedon, disgust overcoming him. "To tell you the truth, man, 'twas not for love of thee that I picked thee out of the devil's clutches; to be plain with you, I believe from my soul that you can better help us to find the Reg'cides than any other man at the business. You know all the ins and outs of the Colony, and I take it are an old hand at low-down tricks by which to spy and ferret."

Scranton swallowed the compliment and his disappointment at giving up his cherished plan of capturing, single-handed, the two hunted men. Besides, he reflected, were it not for the presence of this man, who cut his bonds and gave him the pistol he now held, little chance at the game would have been his. "Half a loaf is better than no bread," he philosophized, before speaking up, though in a whisper lest any chance Indian were

lurking; "surely, surely, I do; and thou knowest the command from the Deputy Governor and the Magistrates now is to search every house if need be."

"Don't I know it?" hissed Breedon; "trust me for not letting such news slip to pay us for lurking around, cooling our heels in this beggarly Colony instead of enjoying New Netherland. But I'll be in at the death, mark you!" and he fingered lovingly his pistol and his knife, which he thought not best to return yet to its sheath.

Then Scranton unfolded his tale. "'Twas the fellow who robbed you of your crown piece," he declared, "who stole me, and spirited me to the Indian camp."

A smothered cry from Breedon's lips. He might dare the Indian devils, entrap the Regicides, and brave many other hairbreadth ventures; but to meet a man who held a grudge for what Beetle had suffered, was something his soul did not hunger for.

"And he's stark, raving mad," communicated Scranton, rather enjoying the other's rueful countenance. "I'd rather have a ghost at my heels." He turned pale at what he had been through, and shivered with fright still.

"But the worst is,"—and a joyful thought struck him. Now if he might only persuade the bully to relinquish the search for the hunted men!

"You may not believe me, but I swear upon my soul, it is the truth — the man who knocked you flat in the tap-room is Goffe the Regicide."

"Now, by all that is most holy, I know you are lying in your black throat!" Breedon was upon him like lightning, his knee upon his chest.

"Air — give me air," faintly begged the wretch. "I swear —"

"I'll choke the lie out, if I can get it no other way," hissed Breedon, with another twist. "Dost think I believe such paltry tale? *Hist!*"

A noise, as of some one drawing stealthily near, was heard. The foot was nearly on their covert. Both men lay low, holding their breath. A leather string dangled down the interstice of the branches. It had a brass end that Scranton remembered adorned the heavy boot of Jed, as his eyes had rested idly on it, when he was chiefly occupied with holding his terror in check through the harangue directed to him by the long, uncouth man, with the big knife in his hand. He pointed to the string, his lips forming one word, "Jed."

Breedon grasped his knife tighter, and held his breath with a face full of fear. The time was not ripe; the foot must be withdrawn; and the bully sighed for a moment, an indefinable clutch at his heart at the thought of attacking a madman. Still the attack must be made, for he was evidently on their path.

These words above them, more breathed than spoken, "I must catch the varmint, an' I will, so help me God, or my name's not Jed Beetle."

The foot was withdrawn, a few steps taken; a stealthy rush from the covert, and two dark figures, armed to the teeth, dashed lightly upon the back of the long, ungainly figure and bore it to the ground.

"I'm catched, it seems!" observed Jedediah Beetle, as they rolled him over with fearful fingers, after tying his hands and feet with whatever material they desired to sacrifice from their garments. Then he knew the part he must play. "Heaven and earth are at war fer ye!" He rolled his eyes at them and grinned like a Cheshire cat; then scowled like a gorgon — with a lightning change that made them skip in apprehension.

"We best be away," chattered Scranton, his teeth rattling like castanets; "I'd rather fall into the hands of the Indians."

"So had I," assented the bully, readily.

"Had ye so?" thought Jed; "I'll give ye a chance." He raised his head suddenly and gave a clear, "*Ta-whit-ta-whoo!*" the signal agreed on between him and the friends to whom he had bound his roving fortunes.

The two men started to run, believing this a fresh sally from departed wits — went blindly on a few steps, to find their path blocked on every side by Indians. The forest seemed to swarm with them.

XVII

THE solitary figure ascending the notch cut into the mountain, about half a mile west from the south end of the "Goodyear Farm," or as it began to be known later, the "Sperry Farm," was a good climber. All else on the west side beside this ravine was sheer precipice; and this rough pathway, little used heretofore except by foot of panther or bear, or scarcely less wild denizen of the forest, the Indian trapper, required a nicety of calculation as to each step, and a clear head. Both of these requisites the girl, deftly picking her way, possessed in a marked degree; and she presently reached the top with scarce a diminution of breath, and a cheek in which only a faint pink flush told of any unwonted exertion. She paused a moment and looked around. Before her lay an irregular formation of rocks of a peculiar shape — more like to heavy stone pillars they were, elevating themselves above the face of the mountain, and crowned with trees and verdure. The branches met at the top, overleaping the cavities beneath, into which had obtruded the encroaching forest;

in some parts completely concealing the fissures and much of the surrounding sides.

Marcia, for it was she, stood motionless for a breathing space, her ear strained for any sound; but it was the silence of the grave, and she placed her hand upon her heart, and heaved a sigh, terrible from the lips of one so young, and so well sheltered in life. Suddenly a rich voice, well modulated and with accent fine, even to an untutored ear, broke forth on the other side of the pile of rocks, and but a few feet from where she stood. The tones were muffled, as must needs be, the space being so filled; but the girl standing there could easily distinguish the words of a psalm, read from Holy Writ by William Goffe. She started suddenly, and the rich blood, held back by her perfect poise of youthful health from overstaining her cheek, now by some command from the heart leaped to its biddings, carrying a rosy hue to the waves of dark hair on her brow. She grasped the basket she held with a firmer hold, and put forth a hand for support against the wooded face of the rock, by whose crevice the wonderful voice was carrying out the message of strength and peace to suffering hearts. For one moment she blindly felt that she was sinking to the earth. In another, the weakness had passed, and Marcia was herself once more.

She stepped lightly around to a fissure larger

than the others, and cleverly concealed by overhanging boughs. To one who knew not the place, there would be no aperture; but Marcia's deft hand had no difficulty in finding it. Pushing the branches aside, she entered into a narrow passage, that, turning, led her to a good-sized cavity. There reposed on a pallet in the corner the venerable man whom she had heard called "Father" by him whom she knew as William Goffe. The latter sat by the old man's side, engaged, as we have seen, in reading from the sacred Scriptures spread upon his knee. There was no anxiety in the faces turned at her sudden entrance, although the right hand of the younger man instinctively touched his side, as though to draw a sword were the natural thing. When his eyes rested on Marcia, he arose, and bowed as respectfully as though she had been a duchess.

"Praise the Lord!" ejaculated General Whalley, at the sweet vision in the gloomy cave. Then he folded his hands on his breast and seemed lost in prayer.

General Goffe took Marcia's hand; it was limp and cold. "I would I had a seat to offer thee, better than this rock." He pointed to the one he had vacated, and as she made no response, he added hastily, "Thou art overtaxed to come to our aid. The ascent has been too much for thy strength."

"Oh, no, no," cried Marcia, finding her tongue in her sudden alarm lest her visits should be stopped, and she suffered him to lead her to the rocky seat. "It was — it is because thou art in danger. I heard thy voice without. Oh, sir, do not thou read in so brave a tone again."

General Goffe looked up and around the face of the walls of the cavern. "It seems so impregnable," he said coolly; "there appears but little chance for such a slight thing as a human voice to penetrate."

"Ah, sir," cried Marcia, with much emotion, "you forget the crevices and the larger fissures."

"True, I forget them, and many more things, when I see thy sweet face and hear thy kind womanly voice;" and with a thought of the English fireside he sighed deeply, essaying like a caged animal to pace up and down the confines of his narrow prison. "Thou art good to remind me, child." He came nearer, and placed his hand, so powerful, with muscles like steel, yet tender as a woman's, upon her dark hair.

Marcia bowed her head as before a benediction. "And do not thou walk beyond the curve in the notch. My uncle bade me tell thee. On the ridge above, a figure might be seen from a point in the valley below."

General Goffe began to pace the earthen floor of the cavern again, already worn hard and smooth

by his restless tread. Marcia raised her face and watched him silently out of troubled eyes. At last he spoke, breaking away from disquieting thoughts, and said abruptly, "I cannot — we cannot let this go on much longer; we are bringing you and all who shelter us into danger. We must give ourselves up."

Marcia sprang from her rock, her beautiful eyes aglow, her bosom heaving, and the color coming and going in stormy tides over her cheek.

"Oh, sir," — she seized his hand, and pressed her young lips to it, — "do not speak thus — stay; think but a moment. Thou wouldst grieve the hearts of many in this Colony nigh unto death. My uncle is determined to save thee and thy father. Mr. William Jones will never give thee up, and, best of all, it would kill the blessed man, our pastor, if aught should betide thee. He has set his heart on thy safety."

General Goffe turned away a moment to hide his emotion; but he did not withdraw his hand, and presently he felt a tear on it. "May God be praised," again ejaculated the old man. "It is the will of God, William," he said. "Who are we to interfere? Perchance He wishes thee to lead armies yet to battle, and is saving thee for the Cause which has brought us here."

The bronzed cheek of the younger man glowed, his eyes brightened, and their piercing light

seemed to penetrate far-away space. Again the cry of battle, again his good sword — that of the Lord and of Gideon. He forgot Marcia and all else, and she, seeing the mood, and knowing that the dangerous influence to surrender had spent itself, crept back to her rock, and began to unpack the basket, setting the food and cordials, with the nicety of a woman's touch, as appetizingly forth as was possible, upon the flat stone that served as a table. Then she poured out a strengthening draught into a cup which she brought, and raising the old man's head upon her young arm, she held it to his lips.

"That wine reviveth me," he said. "Daughter, mayest thou be blessed indeed of the Lord, for thy care of His servants poor and needy and in such peril."

"Think not of it now, father," she said, losing none of her self-possession in ministering to him, but finding it easy to converse. "I would that I could chase from thy brow the memory of all thou hast suffered. But that I cannot do, only bid thee sleep and rest, secure in the thought that we who love thee are watching ever for thy safety. Do thou trust us, and let this poor tired body of thine repose, and gather new strength to itself."

"That I can do, daughter," he said, closing his eyes restfully, "as long as thou art here, and I know thy sweet smile is above my head. But when thou

art withdrawn, and night comes on, and the shadows bring out the wild beasts of the forest, against which we have no shield, oh, then I am weak indeed, and by this token I know I have not many more wearisome years before me."

Marcia's cheek paled at mention of the beasts of the forest. She clasped her hands. "We will pray for thee, father," she cried, burying her face on his arm; "surely the good Lord will restrain the cruel creatures of the wood, and naught shall molest thee. A little while, and this tumult for thee shall pass, and then thou canst be, mayhap, received among us proudly." But her heart failed her even at the thought. A king, especially a revengeful Stuart, goes not back of his royal orders. There it was written in blood — the command to restore these men to his hand. Nothing but the heart and conscience of the colonist, resting on his God, could save them. And this heart and this conscience were, she knew, in the bosom of her pastor. She smiled, and turned her face to the younger man, who apparently had passed unnoticed the conversation.

"Thou hast been an angel of light," he said, suddenly bringing his eyes to bear on her. His face was radiant. "God is good to us, indeed, to send thee here."

Marcia's cheek suffused at this tribute, and her heart beat rapidly.

"But I must not forget," he added, "the danger to thee."

"You forget" — Marcia raised her hand, there was a little defiant gesture, and the tone bore it out — "I am in no danger. I had already espoused by my careless tongue — God forgive me — the cause of the royalist. And oh, sir," — and her head drooped to her bosom, — "that you only could forget — that I could — the cruel, wicked words I said about thee." She rushed tumultuously across the cavern, and knelt at his feet, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Marcia, Marcia!" He essayed to raise her, but still she knelt, her slender shoulders shaking with her distress. "Thou didst not know, — could not realize, — and whatever thou didst or saidst, thou hast atoned for it now in full measure and running over." He was smoothing her hair as he would have done that of his own daughter, had she been before him now.

"Nothing can atone," cried Marcia, through her sobs, which she tried to stifle, with a terror at her heart of the noise betraying the concealment; "not if I walked through rivers of blood, and tasted of the very bitterness of death."

"God forbid," prayed General Goffe, fervently, "that your feet should so be called on to endure. No, Marcia, be comforted; see, we forgive thee, do we not, my father?" He glanced at the old

man watching them with full eyes and heaving breast. "Every breath we draw is but thanking thee, sweet maiden; and now may God forever bless and keep thee ever in His most holy keeping."

Marcia raised her face, a reflection of the holy calm that settled on lip and cheek and brow of the two wanderers resting upon her, and taking up her empty basket, she withdrew from the cave; the boughs swung back into place over the fissure after her lithe figure, and in a moment she was descending the notch to steal into the farm-house unobserved.

XVIII

MARCIA passed down the market-place, her three-mile walk in from the "Farms" nearly at an end. The morning was a most fair one of late May, and the exhilaration that had lent freshness to the dewy eye and cheek and lip still glowed at her heart. She was lost to herself, and was happy.

With a smile on the rosy lips that fell into their olden curves, she had nearly caught herself humming the forgotten tune she had brought away from New Netherland. This would have been dreadful — and to sing on the market-place! She brought herself up with a little laugh at the idea, when —

"I don't see how *you* can laugh" — a voice cold and disdainful struck her ear. Lucy Leet had approached from a side path, and was now nearly at her elbow. Instantly Marcia's face was set in hard, bitter lines, all the curves and dimples and smiles departed. Then Lucy, after this cruel shot, raised her head with its pert chin and perter nose, and with a cool, supercilious gaze stalked directly across Marcia's path, and continued on her way

with many efforts to make her dumpy little figure dignified, only succeeding in disclosing her fixed intention to be an enemy to the girl who had been her dearest friend.

Marcia, too white and cold to feel or to look like a breathing creature, stood motionless, and was only awakened rudely by another voice. This time it was Sylvy Bunce. "I don't wonder she won't speak to you, Marcia, for 'twas a dreadful thing to give up those poor Judges. I expect those Englishmen have caught them; father says we may not know for months yet, although some wicked people are searching around here just the same. But for a girl to go and lead the searchers just where she knew those poor hunted creatures were — even the men looking for them now say they couldn't have done it." It was a long speech; but Marcia asked with a steady gaze into the light blue eyes, "Have you finished?"

"I could tell you ever so much more," said Sylvy with venom, and a fling of her pale thin hair; "everybody's talking of it, and Lucy Leet only does just what you'll find the rest of the folks will do. You won't have a friend in this town pretty soon; I might say the whole Colony."

"If you have finished, will you have the goodness to step aside from my path," said Marcia, in a high, clear voice, for Sylvy had planted herself directly in the girl's way.

"And as for Will Hepburn," Sylvy laughed, a spiteful catch in her voice, "he won't look at you. Lucy Leet said —"

"If you will not get out of my path," cried Marcia, in a towering passion, "I will walk over your miserable body." With that she shot ahead, no one could have told how, and Sylvy was in a heap on the grass beside the path. She picked herself up with a loud cry.

"Marcia Sabine pushed me down," pointing her finger at her. Several men and boys came up, inquiring as to the accident.

"It wasn't any accident," asserted Sylvy, loudly. "She pushed me down on purpose. That's the girl who led the Englishmen where she had seen the two Judges."

They were good patriots to whom she addressed her remarks, and their blood had boiled at the story. So now they gazed after Marcia with lowering brows. "She looks evil-minded," observed one, seeing the girl's back.

"This must be inquired into," said another. "Come, girl, along with us, and tell your story where it ought to be known."

Marcia continued on her walk, with a set, determined stride. No one observing would have dreamed her to be the same girl who a short half hour since was lightly stepping along, in tune with the morning. She paused not, nor checked her

speed till she reached the minister's door, when she rapped, bringing gentle Madam Davenport to answer the summons.

There was sorrow in the gentle eyes when she saw who the visitor was, for she had heard the story that was in every one's mouth, yet she said, "Child, are you ill?" at Marcia's appearance; and she followed her down the hall to the study door with great concern, on the request to see the pastor, for she had always been fond of the girl.

Marcia shook her head, but Madam Davenport's mind flew to the bundle of thoroughwort hanging by the kitchen fireside; "Marcia must have some boneset tea," she decided, "it may save her a fit of sickness," and thereto she made her preparations.

Rev. John Davenport drew the girl gently into the big study and closed the door. "Child, I am sorry for thee," his voice broke with emotion, "but thine is a great part to act. Many a patriot heart would crave it," his eye kindled; "but into thy hands is the honor given."

Marcia raised her face, all the hard set lines melted into a soft womanliness, in which the girlish zest in the May morning, it is true, was lost. But in its stead rose something higher and nobler, with a hint of the stars where one only expects to find flower buds of earth, and she cried, "Do not be sorry for me, dear Pastor, I am so glad — so glad!"

He looked at her keenly; the glow in his eyes now was triumph over this child-soul so fresh and pure, yet so strong at the glimpse of duty. How he reproached himself as he stood there, at his discouragement over her reluctance to come forward into more obedient sympathy with the church. And he sighed, as he felt that what at the time seemed to him sorrow over this reluctance was in reality impatience at his failure to secure the spiritual leadership his soul craved. And he groaned at the tardy revelation.

"Do not feel sadly, dear Mr. Davenport," begged Marcia, with pleading eyes, "for I am, oh, so truly glad; thou canst scarcely guess how glad I am."

"I am not sorrowing for thee, for thou hast played a part whose glory thou dost not know now," replied the minister, solemnly; "but I grieve for myself, Marcia, that my evil and dull heart, so prone to error, has fallen into sin."

"Say not so, dear Pastor," cried Marcia, in a tone of horror, and clasping her hands she gazed at him with a face full of reverence.

The minister shook his head, "Child, child," he said sadly, "the pride that goeth with the possession of spiritual things is perhaps the hardest of all to combat, for the heart ofttimes knoweth not that it is there, and so it has been with me. May God forgive me, but I can see now that my impatience

with thee, when I sought to teach thee out of Holy Writ, and to lead thee in the Divine will, was not godly, but savored of irritation because I desired to lead where one was not prepared to follow."

"Thou wast never impatient," cried Marcia, quickly; "I was a dull pupil, and my heart was hard."

"Thou wast in advance of me, child," said the minister, sadly, "and thy heart pure from pride. But now, dost think thee can bear it to the bitter end — the alienation from thy friends? and I hear that even thy aunt has turned from thee." He bent an anxious gaze to the young face.

Marcia drew herself up proudly. "To the bitter end," she said. "I do not mind,— I do not care,— thou knowest, dear Pastor, and God."

"God knows," said the minister, with a glance upward, "but the martyr's heart may be torn." He went to the window and stood looking out with a troubled face. There stretched out his "private way" and the turreted meeting-house, with the cluster of "Sabba-day housen" and all the usual details of the scene that daily met his eye while standing in this spot. An uncommon excitement seemed to pervade the market-place, — some men and boys hasting to and fro, with the constable at their head. He idly wondered who the offender might be who was probably to be haled to the

whipping-post or to the public stocks, then dismissed it all and turned to Marcia.

"Child, have a care of thyself; bear it all humbly as thy cross, to turn, in God's time, to thy crown of rejoicing."

"Oh, sir," she cried, at that brought to herself and her errand, "do thou be careful of thyself; this is what my uncle bid me say to thee. The report is smouldering, but not dead, that thou hast harbored the Judges after the King's order to arrest them, and some there be who even say thou hast them yet in thy keeping, or that thou dost know where they be."

"I am not afraid," said the minister, simply.

"Nay; but we fear for thee," said Marcia. "Do, good Pastor," — and her cheek paled, — "have heed to these words and prayers of my uncle, and of us all, and guard thyself."

"All is well with them?" asked Parson Davenport, abruptly. "I know it from thine appearance, but I would rather have the assurance from thy lips."

"Yes," said Marcia, and the color rose to her cheek, and the troubled look fled from her eye. "All is well; but I cannot tell thee further, for Uncle Sperry said thou wert not to know. It would be dangerous in the extreme."

The minister heaved a sigh. "It would do no good to their cause were I told," he said quietly.

"It would do no good to their cause," repeated Marcia, happily, with a relief to end the matter thus.

"And now thank thine uncle for sending thee, and may God bless thee forever." Again he raised his hand in benediction, and they parted at the door, the girl with face of peace passing to the grassy slope that led to the road.

"Marcia, Marcia," Madam Davenport called after her, her figure now framed in the doorway. She held a cup in her hand, and Marcia shivered with intuitive knowledge of its contents.

"Do thou drink this, dear." Madam Davenport gently pressed it to her attention, as the girl crossed the threshold; "thou art pale, and lookest ill. I have steeped it for thee. Thou knowest not what virtue lieth in this herb."

Marcia turned away her head, and put forth a gentle, though determined, hand. "Indeed, I am not sick, dear Madam Davenport; do not think me ungrateful. But I need it not."

"Dost thou think thou canst tell as well as those more experienced in such matter, Marcia?" queried the minister's wife, with a gentle reproach in her voice, and still proffering the cup.

"And thank thee so much for thy kindness in preparing it," said Marcia, retreating hastily before the fumes of the steaming cup attacked her further,

and she repeated, "I pray thee to forgive me," looking backward.

"I grieve to think how Marcia Sabine has changed," remarked Madam Davenport to herself, as she retraced her steps to the kitchen, "and more is the pity, seeing how her friends have been obliged to fall away from her. Verily, it behooves me to offer up a special prayer for her headstrong spirit." So she covered up her precious boneset tea, that none should be wasted; some one might happen along who could appreciate it. And she passed into her bedroom and fell on her knees by the big four poster, where so many prayers had been sent up to the throne of grace, and there she wrestled in spirit over the girl she loved from the bottom of her heart.

Poor Marcia! going across the market-place just then she had need of all thy pious supplications, dear, gentle Madam Davenport.

"There she is!" If she heard the exclamation from the lips of a boy a short distance off, she did not connect it with herself, but went swiftly on her way, her sore heart comforted by the half hour in the minister's study, and ready once more to take up its burden cheerfully. She even surprised herself seeking the old refrain brought home from New Netherland that somehow had woven itself into her happier moods, when a hand laid on her arm brought her to a sudden stop. The grasp

was hard and unflinching, and the face above it determined to the last degree. It was the hand and the countenance of Constable Kimberly.

Marcia gazed at him unterrified, with the pure, wide eyes of a child.

"You must come with me, mistress," said the constable. Perhaps there was more of severity in his tone than need be, for it had gone to his heart, the part the girl had played in leading the two English spies to the capture of the Judges. Yet he had been silent in regard to criticism of the matter, as were most of the tongues in the community. No good to supply extra heads for the condemning knife of an angry king.

"Unhand me!" commanded Marcia with flashing eyes, the first surprise over. The constable backed a trifle at the sudden outburst of the girl, whose temper was not to be trifled with, and involuntarily dropped her arm; but, being a man who shrunk not from any duty, he soon recovered himself and grasped it once more. "Thou must come with me, maiden," he declared decidedly, "for the law demands it, and if thou wilt not yield thyself peaceably, there must be force set to the task."

Marcia tore her gaze from his stolid countenance, to let it wander over the crowd, now fast augmenting around the two; on its inner edge, she saw Sylvy Bunce pointing her finger in her direction, but it dropped on meeting the piercing

glance. Some pitying looks were there; but for the most part the expression was one of intention to let the law take its course, and curiosity to see the thing through.

"Thou unholy man, unhand me!" again commanded Marcia, struggling to free herself. "Good people," — addressing the crowd in her distress, — "make him desist, and allow me to go my quiet way." But there was no word, and the faces changed not, but smote her by their silent acquiescence in the law.

Everything swam before Marcia's eyes for a moment, and earth and sky seemed blotted out; then she screamed in a loud voice, "O God above, save me! I know not what threatens me!" and with a desperate movement endeavored to wrench herself free.

"Now I call upon you, good people, to assist me in the name of the law," said Constable Kimberly, nodding to the crowd. "Matthew Bunce, step this way; hold the other arm of this rebellious girl."

Marcia glanced up into the face of Sylvy's father, as he reluctantly stepped to her side. The man turned his face away, and the hand he put forth to his unwilling task, trembled. Suddenly the struggling limbs stilled themselves, and the girl gathered up her soul in a mighty effort to calm face and figure, determined to make no further entertainment for curious eyes.

"There is no necessity to keep hands upon me; I will go with thee," she said to the constable.

He nodded, but beckoned to Bunce to maintain his position on her other side; and between them the girl walked, her slender neck carrying high her head, her eyes gazing straight before her, the crowd falling into the rear, across the market-place, to the meeting-house where chanced to be sitting the Town Court, before whose tribunal the petty cases coming up in the town were tried.

"We are in time," observed the constable, moving briskly in through the doorway. Marcia flushed not as she followed; but Matthew Bunce hung his head and looked all ways for escape.

The town crier was up by the deputies, for the Town Court that had about finished the day's proceeding hardly expected this new case so soon; although it had issued the necessary order for the arrest of Marcia Sabine on the complaint of Sylvy Bunce and one or two persons who had seen the unfortunate meeting in the market-place. The *rencontre* occurring in this public place, and the sitting of the Town Court, enabled the retributive hand of the law to execute speedy vengeance on this particular offence.

The whole air of the court room was freezing with Puritan justice; God's love seemed to have flown. To Marcia's agonized soul her bleeding heart appeared now about to be torn out and offered up

to that cruel Power that had created her, that owned her body and soul, and would not save, at sound of her cry for mercy, when man's hard hand was against her and there was none to help. She raised her head defiantly, wishing she could in the meeting-house raised to His worship denounce Him at once and forever.

The four deputies for the Town Court pushed aside their papers, and looked long and hard at the prisoner. Her youth and the fame of her beauty, the good standing in the community of her uncle and his family, sent a pang through each breast of those who were now forced to judge her. Yet justice was holier to them than mercy; and the pity of their countenances soon merged into a stern, unyielding determination to perform their duty.

The other prisoners, with their witnesses collected in the meeting-house, were deserted by the curious for this new and absorbing case.

"Call this case," commanded the presiding deputy, to have the misery over for Marcia, and get her from the reach of curious eyes.

"*Silence in the presence of the Court!*" called the town crier.

"Marcia Sabine!" the deputy spoke her name in a low, uneven voice. As if she had not heard, she still remained motionless. The constable laid his hand upon her arm to propel her forward; but she

shook it off, and went up lightly toward the judges' seat, her bright dark eyes fastened upon the four faces before her.

"Let the chief witness be called, and the other witnesses," ordered the deputy. Sylvy Bunce all colors, with head hanging in shame, and willing to suffer anything if she could only take back the results of her sudden spleen, sneaked in, trying to edge into a corner; but she was ordered to come up in front.

"Let the other witnesses be summoned," repeated the deputy, quite restored now to his element, but his voice failed again when he addressed the prisoner. "Marcia Sabine," he said, not looking at her, "you are charged with a most heinous sin against the peace of this town. All the more is it a crime for you, who have been gently brought up, to fall out by the way with another of the community, who by reason of her tender age and her sex, we are bound to protect, and we must moreover make an example of you, to the terror of all the other evil-doers. The complainant," pointing to the shrinking Sylvy, who presented by this time a good figure for sympathy, "doth lodge this charge against thee, that coming across the market-place this morning, thou didst, after gentle and pliable speech from her, turn suddenly as thou wouldst rend her in a fury; and then thou knockedst her to the ground, and trampled on her."

A silence, as of death, fell upon the meeting-house.

"What hast thou to say for thyself?" asked the deputy, somewhat impatiently, as the stillness palled upon the assembly.

"As I live, and there is a God in heaven," cried Marcia, suddenly, her clear, flute-like voice piercing each heart; "though why I should call upon God, since He has deserted me, I —"

"Silence, unhappy girl, and rave not at thy Maker," commanded the deputy, sternly; "know thee not that He hath created thee, and can do what He will with His own?"

"I know full well," cried Marcia, bitterly.

"Then confine thyself to the facts in the case," said the deputy, with cold, forbidding face and gesture, "and give us not cause to make thy sentence harder. Is 't true, the charge?"

"Never!" cried Marcia, still not removing her eyes from the faces of the deputies. As for Sylvy, the worm beneath her feet would have received more attention.

"Thou didst not meet the complainant, Sylvy Bunce, this morning as thou wert crossing the market-place?"

"I did," said Marcia, still not moving her eyes.

"Very well," and this was duly recorded. "And she did give thee gentle and pliable speech?"

Marcia was silent; so the question was repeated.

"I wish not to say aught against another," she replied. There was a murmur of approval from some of the listeners; but the marshal looked sharply in their direction, so it died a sudden death.

"Sylvy Bunce," commanded the deputy, sharply, "come hither and repeat the tale thou didst tell to Constable Kimberly."

Thereupon Sylvy, more dead than alive, and looking every way but at the judges, trembled her way along till she stood in the required space.

"I said —" she mumbled, in such a low voice that none could hear, least of all the judges.

"Find thy voice, girl, and speak louder," commanded the deputy.

"I said," began Sylvy, twisting her hands together, "it is — it is a long time since I have seen you, Marcia, — and — and — "

"What else? This is trifling stuff. Was thy manner pleasant and engaging also?"

"Yes," said Sylvy, and no more could be gotten from her, though they plied her with questions; for she began to cry and moan, being now nearly frightened out of what sense she had.

"And the prisoner, Marcia Sabine, did then, with no just cause or reason, set upon thee in a fury and beat thee to the ground, where she trampled upon thee?"

"Yes," said Sylvy; then she howled out, "*oh!*" so shrilly that all the listeners started.

"What is it made thee cry out?" asked one of the other deputies, bringing his face forward.

"She did hurt me so when she threw me and trampled upon me," said Sylvy, saying the first thing that came into her head.

"Marcia Sabine," said the chief deputy, wishing she would, but for one instant, remove her eyes from the faces of her judges, "is this tale of the charge against thee true?"

"No," said Marcia, with unmoved face and eyes.

"In what manner does it differ from truth?" the deputy put the question.

"In all, except that I met her," said Marcia.

"Thou shalt tell us what she said to thee, in thine own words; then we will judge between thee."

For the first time since her entrance the hue of her face, clear in its white outline, changed; and Marcia hesitated.

"I cannot," she said.

"Thou canst not?" repeated the deputy, with displeasure. "Then do thou know, Marcia Sabine, it will go hard with thee, if thou canst not obey this Court? And thy defence appeareth weak indeed, if thou art not able to give thy record of the facts."

Marcia moved not her eyes, though the color rose and fell on her cheek.

"Call the other witnesses," commanded the

deputy, impatiently, seeing there was no hope of further reply from her lips.

So Samuel Buttonwood, a half-grown boy, shuffled up to the place indicated for him to stand, and turned out his toes with importance.

"The witness will speak. What sayest thou, Samuel Buttonwood?"

"I seen her —"

"Who?" interrupted the deputy, harshly.

"Her," pointing with a dingy finger to Sylvy's shrinking figure, "a-comin' 'long; and she stopped and spoke to her" — with a sweep of the finger Marcia was now indicated — "and after a minute or two she knocked —"

"Who?" again the deputy interrupted, this time very testily; "mention the names when you speak of people, or it will be worse for thee, Samuel Buttonwood. Now who were you talking of last, and what did she do?"

"I warn't talkin' of any one last," said the youth, all broken up in his ideas.

"You said she knocked," cried the deputy, rapping on the table with impatient knuckles; whereat everybody smiled. This being considered contempt of court, the deputy turned furiously red and commanded the crier to cry out, "*Silence in the presence of the Court!*" till no one dared to look other than solemn as an owl. "Which girl was it you meant?"

"Her," said Samuel Buttonwood, stupidly.

"Call her name," cried the deputy at him, whereat Samuel screamed at the top of his voice, with ready obedience, thinking to earn favor, "Marcia Sabine."

"*Silence in the presence of the Court!*" called the crier again.

"Marcia Sabine knocked — go on," said the deputy, looking as if on the edge of an apoplectic fit. "Tell the story as quickly as possible, or I shall have somewhat to tell thee, Samuel Buttonwood, when this case is over, that is not to thy liking."

Thus adjured, the luckless youth, with no further thoughts of turning out his toes with elegance, rattled all he knew, and a great deal more, due to a vivid imagination and a slender basis of facts. "Marcia Sabine — knocked her — down — an' stomped — on — her — an' stomped — on — her — an' — "

"That will do," said the deputy, irritably cutting short the torrent. "Any other witnesses?" looking around on the assembly.

Constable Kimberly now dragged into unwilling notice two or three persons, the same to whom Sylvy in her first burst of fury had appealed, and who had unguardedly expressed their sympathy from the attitude of spectators. They had nothing for it now but to sustain their position; and

they managed to do so by saying nothing that pulled down Sylvy's statement, at the same time there was an utter absence of any direct testimony. Through it all Marcia stood motionless, her cheek, in which the color had died out, now quite white, while her eyes were still fixed upon the faces of the judges as they conferred together.

"I must do my duty; we must all do our duty," the deputy was saying at last. "In the face of God and our townspeople, we must deal righteously with each case as it comes up to us," he announced, addressing the court. "And if thou wert the daughter of our most revered public official, Marcia Sabine," he added, turning to her, "thou shouldst have the same judgment meted out to thee. Thy sentence is that thou must receive thirty and nine lashes at the public whipping-post."

XIX

A SILENCE as of death filled the assembly room. Then an unexpected thing happened. Marcia opened her white lips. "Let it be now," she said, "else I die."

The deputies fidgeted about among their papers. Too much haste was not expedient; yet perhaps it was best to have it over with.

"Constable, you must do your duty," said the presiding deputy, in a tone intended to be cold. But Marcia had already stepped to the door, the one thought at her heart that only by a quick execution of the sentence would her home friends be kept in ignorance of her shame till the public exhibition of it was all over. And her heart, that felt deserted by her God, was now busy with thoughts of the lonely fugitive from a cruel death that ever menaced him night and day, hidden in his cave in the mountain fastness. "I am nearer to him now in the humiliation and suffering," said Marcia to herself, passing out of the meeting-house with all eyes upon her; and she revelled in what was to be endured, and hugged her misery tightly to her heart. By so much was she now lifted up

to the level of the man she loved. Yes, she knew it now — *the man she loved;* for the agony of the past days had bared her soul, always truthful, to a keener revelation, made possible only through the suffering of this present moment.

That there was aught between her soul and that of the one she loved as barrier in the sight of God and man, she was innocent. As the little child at its mother's knee takes what is provided for it of good, questioning not, dreaming not, of hindrance to the sum of its delight, so Marcia, unconsciously at first, and now in the full knowledge of the revelation of her love, opened her overcharged heart to the joy of the discovery. What to her was pain? So did he suffer in hapless dreams of coming ill. What was humiliation? Naught, in comparison to what he had endured, and must endure.

She knew not when the preparations were complete; nor that her face shone as the first stroke fell. There was no command, "Constable, do your duty," as on many previous instances before the well-worn whipping-post. That officer was having all he could do to perform his part, anyhow; and his hand shook so that, confused with very shame, he miscounted, and executed a lighter sentence by two strokes than was ordered. No one set him right, as he nervously completed the abominable service in the midst of a throng of people, most of whom, when the sentence really

went into effect, carried averted faces. Only one remarked anything audibly, and his words were, "I'm sorry to see that maiden suffer for a foolish quarrel; but it is just desert for her betraying the Judges."

He stood a few steps from the whipping-post, and evidently intended his words to be heard by the girl, for they were so lowly spoken that they fell short of other ears. Marcia forgot her pain as she listened, and she smiled in the midst of it; and stroke thirty-two descended.

It was short work now to the end; she was nearly oblivious to all outward surroundings. Gone was the cruel whipping-post, gone was the shame, as, beyond the pain and the suffering, she was now in spirit with the one her soul loved, knit to his soul now by the agony she had passed through, and by this bond to be forever one with him.

A tumult filled the market-place; stroke thirty-seven, nervously adjudged the complement of the sentence by the constable, was just descending; it strikes, when a sudden parting of the crowd allowed to rush through a girl who gave a loud scream that shrilled its way to every heart. Her muslin cap strayed to her shoulders, letting the soft, light hair escape dishevelled, as if she had run long and far on tireless feet. Her bosom heaved with more than the exertion, for the emotion she could not

speak flashed from her blue eyes. It was Lucy Leet.

She flung herself forward and threw her arms around the poor shoulders as they were releasing Marcia; then she found her tongue. "Men — nay, ye are not men," she cried at them with blazing face and eyes. "What dreadful work is here? My father shall give ye what ye deserve. Infamous! Oh, Marcia, Marcia!" she wailed, showering kisses across the red weals raised by the whip.

"Hush! it was by order of the Town Court," said a woman in her ear. It would not do for the daughter of the Deputy Governor to get into entanglement with the town officers.

"By order of the Town Court!" repeated Lucy, in amazement. She could find no other words. Her brain surged with a bewildering whirl, as she sat on the grass, and despite the girl's resistance drew Marcia's head into her lap. "I understand ye not," she cried; and the constable, not caring to tarry to give explanations, and the other officers having disappeared, she continued to say to the group: "I understand ye not. This is no time to do aught but to care for her. Take her up," she appealed to some strong-armed men standing near, "and carry her to Mr. William Jones's mansion."

But Marcia drew herself away, and looked her full in the face. "Your letter," she said simply.

"My letter," moaned Lucy, half choked with sobs. "Oh, Marcia, forget it," she cried.

"Nay," said Marcia, "I cannot; it is burned in here." She held her hand to her breast, and still further drew herself away.

"Oh, Marcia!" cried Lucy, quite heart-broken at that.

"Give me your hand," said Marcia, searching on either side for a kind face. There were plenty such now, and their owners stretched them forth, "Let me, let me help you," while Lucy Leet, the daughter of the Deputy Governor, lay sobbing on the grass. Suddenly she sprang to her feet. "Marcia, on my knees I beg you to forgive me," she said, careless who heard.

"I forgive you," said Marcia, helped now to her feet, and leaning on the arm of the woman who had told Lucy of the action of the Town Court, "but I cannot go with you."

Lucy, with a wild glance around for suitable assistance, started suddenly, then dashed off. A man was approaching down the side of the market-place on horseback; the beast, urged to its utmost, was lashed constantly by the frantic hand of its rider who leaned forward in the saddle, showing a haggard, distraught face and streaming hair. It was Will Hepburn.

"Get out of the way," he called at her hoarsely, as she nearly flung herself before him. "My horse

is as wild as I, and will kill you, an' you do not stop."

"Will, Will," screamed Lucy, careless of the warning, while he pulled the creature by main strength back to its haunches, "they have whipped Marcia — see — see!" she continued to shriek, pointing a shaking hand at the girl.

"For God's sake!" cried Will, "tell me not I am too late!" He bowed his head to the saddle, utterly spent, and great sobs shook his figure. Marcia followed the gaze of the people after Lucy. "Will," she called with clear voice, "take me home." She could be kind to him now, in the overflowing of her great love, and gentle, and pitiful; and she walked forth to meet him.

Without one glance at the concourse, without one word, for he knew if he spoke it would be to utter a torrent such as no man could stand under, and he should end by curses, if not worse, on them and their work, he leaped from the saddle, and lifting Marcia tenderly, he raised her to the back of the horse. "Canst ride easily, sweetheart?" he asked feverishly.

"Yes, Will," she said gently; but her eyes reproved him for the word.

Then he turned and addressed the group. "May God's curse" — he began with wild eyes, raising his right hand to heaven, but Marcia pulled down his arm. "Take me home, Will," she said. And

Lucy Leet, both young hands to her eyes, fled, sobbing as if her heart would break, home to the Jones mansion; to the Rev. John Davenport's; to all who would hear the dreadful story; for, strange as it may seem, the suddenness of the whole thing had precluded any possibility of its reaching the inmates, well drawn into those quiet households. And Marcia, with her love held warm and sweet and secret at her heart's centre, felt only peace on that homeward ride.

Poganuc, his long, lithe body networked with muscles like steel cords, strode off through the forest. Occasionally he would stop, and in Indian tongue address himself to the Great Spirit; and at such times it seemed not so much in the nature of worship as of some awful incantation or curse upon which his gestures and words were employed. Then he would compose face and figure into their usual stolidity, and stride on with swift, even paces, getting over the ground rapidly. It was a journey to be accomplished in a couple of hours, this to which he had set himself, even to the camp around Milford; but redoubling his exertions, he might easily make it less; and so it proved to be. And he walked in among the tribe there, fresh and untired, with a good half hour to spare.

Jedediah, just in with some young braves from the hunt, met him. "What news?" his eyes asked. Then he knew something was wrong.

"My people," said Poganuc, "and you, my white brother, who art one of us, and dost serve the Great Spirit, rouse ye; there is evil come to the Pale Face Maiden."

"God Almighty!" exclaimed Jed, in a white fear. "Speak nothin' but the truth, Poganuc, as you vally your skin; fer I swan to ye, ef ye be a-lyin'—" He did not finish the sentence.

"I love the Pale Face Maiden better than I do you," declared Poganuc, his eyes shining. "She has ever been good to me, and she has smiled, and bound my wounds one day when torn by the panther; and now may the Great Spirit forget not to blight all those who have harmed her, and to waste them, and lay their village low, and to make the little children wish they had never been born!" He raised his face, dark and glowing, and his right hand to heaven.

"Stop, Poganuc," cried Jed, in horror. The other Indians grouped around stolidly kept their eyes fixed on the speaker.

"The Great Spirit tells Poganuc to avenge the Pale Face Maiden," he went on, each word brought out passionlessly; yet Jed, who knew so well the savage nature underneath, trembled. And he restrained himself from the question raging at his heart, "What can have befallen her?" for fear of adding to the smouldering and relentless fury.

"But I cannot do it alone, my brethren," Poga-

nuc was saying, "and I come to you for counsel and help, and it must be done quickly, even as the lightning strikes the oak." He pointed to a tall tree shrivelled and dying, that a twelvemonth before had lifted a canopy of green above their heads. "So would I strike; so must we all, till not a stone remains above another in the village." He pointed to New Haven Town.

Jed's blood curdled in his veins. He could scarcely breathe for the pounding of his temples and throat, yet he gave no sign. Would he be able to stop the frenzy before it had communicated itself to the whole band? If not, woe to the fairest town in the Colony!

"Ye must help me, my brethren," Poganuc was still speaking; although it seemed to Jed's fevered brain as if some horrid dream had seized him, out of which he must soon wake. "And before another moon can pass must we carry out the wishes of the Great Spirit. I go now to other tribes at the westward, and we will all meet here."

"Poganuc," drawled Jed, but his feet seemed slipping down, down an abyss so black no eye could fathom it; and his soul was dark with dread, "I am your brother, as thou saidst, and whatever you do for the Pale Face Maiden I will be at your right hand; but would she like it — this — this plan?" He felt his face drawn by his anxiety; and to conceal it, he picked up a pine stick,

whipped out his knife, and began to whittle with all his might along its edge.

"The white brother asks would the Pale Face Maiden like this vengeance of the Great Spirit upon those who have done her harm? No, no! but the Great Spirit consults not us his creatures when the whirlwind is to be unloosed, and the war-cry echoed through the forest." The Indian's dark eye glowed, and his impassive face lighted up. A series of scarcely audible grunts were begun, and, spreading into a deeper sound, the whole tribe seemed animated at once. Jed's skin began to creep upon his bones.

The moon, just then passing out beyond the edge of a cloud, brought out the speaker's face into sharpest outline, and lighted up his intense eyes. The eyes of all the band stirred not, but their gaze was centred on him. It was an awful moment, intense and dramatic.

"It's now or never," said Jed to himself. "I'm bust ef I can stand it a minute longer. *Hey!*" it was an explosive note, and involuntarily the whole band moved uneasily as one man. Jed strutted into the centre of the circle at an easy gait, and punctuating off the syllables with the half-whittled pine stick, and looking them all intently in the eye by sweeping his gaze leisurely around the ring, he thus held forth:—

"Ye all know me, how I've cast in my lot to be

one with ye, an Injun with the Injuns, je whitaker blazes!" (Better give 'em some big words they can't see into, so they'll git flabbergasted in the beginnin', and think too I've got spirits I'm on good terms with.) "Jimboree, jindigger-skites, guyziboo!" Jed brought this out with great solemnity, rolling up his eyes at the moon, till little but the whites could be seen. "I swear to you," — here he executed remarkable gestures, filling himself with admiration on his own genius, — "if you think the Great Spirit wants you to do any such thing as Poganuc says, you are off in your ca'lations, jamboree-jumboree whizzleback!" Jed was roaring now, and jumping excitedly about, clapping his big hands together, and sawing his long body back and forth rapidly. To the stolid, impassive Indians knowing Jed so well these antics were interesting, and invested his words with occult meaning. They gave him the closest attention.

"No — no — no!" roared Jed, at his wits' end to know how to wind up impressively. Suddenly he pointed to the moon, fair and majestic; and apparently apostrophizing it, he said very deliberately, dropping his voice an octave, more or less, "Bum-bill-li-goat-oh serree-ami-bus jee-whit-aker-blazes!" Then he brought his eyes down to their level, and surveyed them slowly; and bending his head in sorrow, he spread his hands before him, and went through the form of washing them.

They clearly understood this part of the performance. If they rose in their wrath, and descended on the fair town of New Haven in the vengeance of a night raid, Jed would not be with them. They drew off and consulted together.

Poganuc surveyed him with a countenance in which, contrary to the Indian habit, the expression of astonishment rested. The savage knew that Jed worshipped the very ground that the Pale Face Maiden trod upon; and in losing him as an ally, he felt his confidence shaken sadly in the whole expedition. He therefore was at no pains to conceal this from the tribe; and it was therefore an easier conclusion than might have been expected, to arrive at the decision that the wigwams of New Haven Town should rest undisturbed; and that the Great Spirit had signified through Jed his willingness to be appeased in some other way.

"I will go with ye a little way, Poganuc my brother," signified Jed, as the young savage prepared to return to the "Sperry Farm," where his daily dasks were performed, Farmer Sperry paying him liberally as the times allowed, for he was a good steady worker. The white man's soul was on fire to know what had befallen Marcia, yet he dared not put the question. A little word might fire the train to explosion, and no second attempt could extinguish it.

"She was beaten at the whipping-post this day," said Poganuc, suddenly volunteering the information, as they pushed on into the forest.

"Oh, my God!" Jed staggered back and laid his tousled head against a tree-trunk.

The young Indian came close to him, and laid his mouth to the tawny cheek. "Do you still say the Great Spirit wants us to leave the wigwams of the white people's town to smile in the sunshine?" he hissed.

Jed shook all over in his mighty effort at control.

"Yes — yes — oh, my brother," he raised his head, his big eyes shining and wet; "more than ever I tell ye, do it not. God above keep ye from it! O God, hear my prayer, and tell him it shall not be done." He swung his long arms over his head, as he sprang erect. At this moment the sky, which had gradually overcast its brightness with the scudding clouds, suddenly emitted a long shooting ray of lightning, and instantly a peal of thunder shook the forest. Jed was transfixed at the suddenness, as if he had seen an apparition; and the young Indian bounded into the forest at this exhibition of what he had more than once suspected, the very good personal relations between the Great Spirit and his white brother.

XX

THE old man's face was suffused with tears that he was at no pains to restrain. They flowed unchecked down his furrowed cheek and into his white beard.

"If thou wert not hampered by me, William," he said feebly, "thou couldst put many leagues between thee and thy pursuers."

"Only to perish in the wilderness, father," said the younger man to comfort him.

"Nay: thou art too ingenious to be trapped like an animal at bay. Thou wouldst soon plan a way of escape — thou, William, to whose iron hand and nimble brain a mighty army has responded. Thou wast born to great things, only half accomplished in thee yet. Thou shalt yet marshal thy hosts and lead to victory with the banner of Liberty over thy head, please God."

The iron hand, yet soft as a woman's to the touch, trembled. General Goffe stood leaning against a shelving edge of their rock-bound home where he had been quietly watching the gentle stir of the branches flapping with the breeze against the principal entrance to the cave. He

had been lost in thought, as was his wont of late. Perchance, his mind was busy with the brilliant past, when a grand sphere had claimed him, and the feeble old man, stretched on the pallet before him, had swept into the prominence of a great Cause which they had early dominated, instead of falling into the rank and file of those who carried it forward. Cromwell, the sagacious, seldom erred when he picked his men; a legion stood about him for selection from a people whose unhappy situation had long bred discontent in minds of the finest caliber. So the selected men were like gems of the first water, fitted to shine in affairs of State, civil, political, and military; and their arena — England — set their part to be played, in the eyes of the entire world.

How they played it! The silent man so pensive of attitude, with the iron hand now clenched against the shelving rock, and concealed by his figure, has had burned into his brain every act and scene of that long drama. Is this the end? Or, as the feeble figure now quiet as if laid out in its long repose had said, are there still grand and brilliant episodes to follow? God alone knew. Ready for them as ever, he, General William Goffe, would be, and fiercer and wiser and stronger for some future struggle. But he, the great man, laid low; the counsellor of the Protector, — the hero of an hundred critical affairs of State and of military

achievement, the servant of God, revered by all, — his day was over and done. The curtain had been rung down for Edward Whalley, whose white head must be brought in sorrow to death in ignominious exile.

The iron hand clenches, until the long and taper nails rend their way into the flesh; still the quiet figure by the shelving rock stirs not, and still the waving branches sway gently back and forth. General Whalley's eyelids have dropped over the tired and hopeless eyes. The gaze of William Goffe wanders around the cave; but he sees not the bare interior of a refuge fit only for a hunted beast flying from its pursuers. He sees the Parliament Army, where his brilliant record soon raises him from high office to higher; he sees the Parliament itself, where his part was not small; then his entrance into the House of Lords — and the last grand stroke that proclaimed him one of the powers to be feared by the enemies of England. His blood stirs; by a sudden movement he starts away from his rock; his iron hand unclenches and involuntarily seeks its sword. Ah! the vision changes — the dream is swept away — nothing but ruin, if not death, awaits; and the bare and slimy walls of a cavern mock his eyes.

General Whalley lifts his eyelids. "So have I started from many an uneasy dream," he murmured pityingly.

General Goffe resumes his quiet attitude and observes carelessly, "It is a trick to be overcome; and verily I think my will must be brought into play," and he smiles. The bronze face with its piercing black eyes is lightened till its beauty seems to illumine the gloomy cave itself. The old man's eyes feast upon it. Then he sighs deeply.

"God is our Refuge and Strength, remember that, my father," said the man, at length. "His will be done. Let us not repine, but keep ourselves in this fastness as though the sword of Gideon were to be put any moment into our hand."

"My soul rejoiceth to hear thee speak thus, William," said General Whalley. "And I counsel thee so to exercise thy mind as to be in that attitude. But my day is past; and although I wait upon that God whose servant I have been and am, yet for me remains no work to do. Would God He saw fit to take me to Himself and free thee of the incumbrance."

"Say not so, my father," cried General Goffe, in deep emotion, and crossing the cave, he knelt down by the pallet and took up, with a touch as gentle as a woman's, the wasted hand. "Thou hast many years before thee yet, please God."

"Nay, my soul desires it not." The old man raised his other palm, and smoothed gently the

wealth of raven hair falling over the younger brow. "Thou was ever a good son, and as well beloved as though thou was begot from my loins. May God forever bless thee, and give to thee deliverance from this burden, and to me, rest."

He closed his eyes wearily, and seemed to fall into the slight stupor that overcame him often of late. For a moment, General Goffe remained at the pallet side, unable to suppress his emotion; then gently laying the poor thin hand upon the tired heart, he went over to a corner of the cave, and drawing from beneath a large stone a folio of writing materials, he sat down and began to note his thoughts, putting a guard upon the letters lest they betray too much.

But his mind — how it revelled in the old scenes, where he was back again, as his hand traced the poor restrained language; all that was left to him in which to tell of faithful love to a sorrowing, waiting heart. His happy home life with the daughter of him whose worn-out body but tireless spirit was now his sole companion — what a wife had Heaven given to him. And his children — precious sign and promise of this bliss upon earth, sealed by God's love and mercy. Better to dwell on this picture of olden scenes, than of battles, and of Parliament, of stormy enactments of Divine wrath to herald Universal Liberty. The fireside and the home-work, beautiful in its surroundings,

and withdrawn from the splendor and glamour of the public eye; and agonized as must be the heart that dwells upon its lost delights, the memory of what has been shall speed the soul far on its way to God.

So General Goffe mused and wrote; now rapidly, now allowing his thoughts to wander in the past, now studying to couch what he wished to say so as to do harm to no one should the letter miscarry. He was thus occupied when a slight noise at the entrance by whose shelving rock he had so lately stood, aroused his attention. He looked up, to see Marcia, her basket on her arm.

With gallant grace he pushed the unfinished letter aside on the big stone, and rose to give her greeting. She bowed her face on which a soft blush had risen; but the ascent was steep, and the excitement, lest detection trail her footsteps, must naturally tint the cheek.

"He sleeps," said the girl, in a low whisper, and relinquishing her basket to his hand.

"Yes, child," said General Goffe, setting the basket down, "and it is well; for by that path comes forgetfulness. Now do thou assure me once more with thine own lips that no harm is coming to thee by ministering to us."

"I do tell thee so," said the girl, her shapely hands folded in easy grace as she stood before him, the color coming and going in her cheek.

"Thou must call to mind how I avowed myself thine enemy. Oh, do not make me remember it again" — and a spasm of distress convulsed her face.

"Child, child," said General Goffe, taking one of the shapely hands, pity softening the piercing black eyes to a luminous tenderness; "do not torture thy young soul with further thought of that. Cast it from thee, Marcia." It seemed as if his own daughter Elizabeth stood there, whose anguish of mind was to be assuaged. God give him grace to do it for any young soul for her sake.

Marcia's bosom heaved with sudden emotion. Her beautiful eyes sought the ground, as her hand rested in the iron one whose fingers enfolded it softly.

"Thou canst best serve God, sweet maiden, by casting out bitter thoughts. They ill become a fresh life. And when a soul is so beautiful as thine, do not mar it, but employ its every faculty for God's service." He bent his eyes upon her downcast face; his one intent to show his gratitude and to lift up to future development the grand possibilities of a nature which his keen intuition had divined.

"Oh, that I could do aught for thee!" he exclaimed after a silence. Marcia could not speak. "My poor wretched, maimed life is powerless to repay thee a tenth of what I owe thee."

"Thou wilt escape," cried Marcia, with sudden energy, raising her eyes dark and luminous; "thou wilt find thy life a new one in this country, where, oh, sir, thou canst perchance offer to our Colonies your best service."

General Goffe started, dropped her hand, which unconsciously he had held, and searched her glowing face for the inspiration which seemed divine.

"Thinkest thou so, Marcia, sweet maiden?" His eyes glowed; and a rare and radiant smile lighted his bronzed face, as he gave himself up to her mind, dominant where it fell thus into his longing.

"Indeed, I do!" asserted Marcia, radiant with happiness in her power, and glowing like a wild rose, while Hope fluttered at her heart. The gloomy cave became at once a Paradise, with Love at the entrance. "Oh, sir, remember thine own words but just spoken to me, 'Thou canst best serve God by casting out bitter thoughts;' and surely none so bitter and cruel as to think that God has deserted thee" — she forgot in her bliss the turning from God of her own soul in its awful trial — "and doomed such as thee to a lingering exile."

"I will remember, dear maiden," declared Goffe, solemnly, but the smile for her lingered. "Never will I forget thy words; poor and weak they seemed on my lips, but eloquent with God's truth on thy

sweet ones. If I could only bestow upon thee aught of that future good, when it shall come to me, as please God thou makest me to believe some day in His own good time it will," — he bowed his head reverently, — "now would I promise it, to the half of my kingdom."

"Let me only serve thee, dear master," cried Marcia, in a sudden transport, clasping her hands. How beautiful she was! Only God's angels could so look, thought General Goffe, as he gazed entranced at her. "I will devote my life to the Cause, and to thee!"

He seemed not to hear her, but gazed on.

She pleaded again, raising her slender arms toward the rent and ragged vault of the cave. "See, I devote my life, each hour, each moment, to the Cause that holds thee;" then stopped, panting, unable to find another word.

"Alas, child!" the general awoke from his trance, "I would not enchain another life than my own to this or any other service."

"But thou hast saved mine — it is thine," cried Marcia, her voice choked and broken. "Do with me as thou wilt, only let me serve thee — and the Cause." She crossed her arms which fell suddenly, humbly, on her breast, and waited for the answer.

"As thou wilt," said the general, at length, willing to humor this youthful enthusiast, and think-

ing God's service to be the better wrought out by the enlistment of young souls.

"I thirst," said the voice of the aged man on the pallet, whose eyes opened suddenly; and the tone carried somewhat of petulance with it.

General Goffe stepped hastily to give to him the cooling draught; and Marcia, spent with her emotion, crossed to the further side of the cave and sank upon the stone that had been his seat, her bosom heaving with what was now a bliss almost terrifying in its intensity.

"I am to serve him ever—and the Cause—he has promised." Her heart sang for joy like unto the angelic voice of paradise.

The open letter, pushed by the hasty hand of the writer to a corner of the big flat stone that served as a table, fluttered itself against Marcia's elbow. As she leaned there, her head upon her hand, intent on the rapture surging her heart, she glanced with vacant eyes, whose sight was turned within, to its surface; then suddenly the thought —his hands have touched it, his fingers have traced the characters upon its face,—and without stopping to think, she bent to touch her lips to the paper.

Suddenly, as though a serpent had bitten her, she started back. With blanched face and wild eyes she was gazing at it.

"My father," General Goffe was saying over by

the pallet, "would it ease the pain for me to read from the Holy Writ? I think I best do so, and stay thy soul and mine with God's food for all His suffering children."

She darted nearer, hung over the letter, and pierced it with her gaze; perchance she had not read the words aright. "Thy heart is in safe keeping, and we are both in God's. Do thou keep the home, dear —" Goffe had been about to add "mother," the fiction agreed upon between his wife and himself when parting. But no fiction could have held unbroken its film before the eyes of love like this that now rent it in twain.

With a hoarse cry, wrung from her by the disclosure, Marcia sprang to her feet and dashed out through the entrance, and into the heart of the fastness, far, far — God! No, she called not on God; only sped on and on.

"She hears pursuit! We are lost!" exclaimed the two generals.

XXI

LOVE, so dethroned and outraged, turned upon her like an angry goddess. With a whip of scorn it drove her far, far into the forest. He had been playing with her love, perchance, — and here she drew her breath hard, — to save himself at her hand. For her love thrown back upon herself, the stormy tower of his safety and refuge should be broken. No one else could help the fugitives as could she.

"Oh, God!" she cried, and threw herself upon the dark green moss and buried her face within it.

Yes; here was the mystery of his acceptance of her words. And she writhed in very anguish of spirit, while a wave of black and bitter thoughts came swelling over her soul.

"I did not know he was bound to any — " and her white cheek o'erflamed till it seemed as if the angry blood would burst the delicate skin — "for his eyes! oh, they looked love into my soul and awoke it, God save me, only to die."

She put forth her strong, young hands and tore the soft, green moss from the mould where it nestled so confidingly under the protecting trees.

"So am I torn," she cried bitterly, her fingers still mechanically despoiling with cruel haste. Suddenly she flung herself erect, and with flaming eyes and cheek white as the driven snow, she cried, "Heaven witness now what I vow as I spurn him. *I will deliver them up to justice!*"

She sprang to her feet, a new purpose at her heart; and a fierce and bitter joy tugged for recognition, where before had been only despair. "So should I have done before, had I not been overtaken by a love that has been trodden under foot. No more will Marcia Sabine lose herself with soft and pitying impulse. Come now, stern resolve, and help me to do my duty to my King, whom I basely deserted for yon paltry wretch!" She pointed the finger of scorn in the direction of the cave, then strode off toward the trail that led to the market-place, only to find, a few steps yet farther on, her way suddenly blocked by a figure tall and stalwart and immovable as one of the giant trees.

"Poganuc," she gasped, "how you startled me!"

The Indian said not a word.

"A foolish fright you gave me." She essayed to laugh, but the smile set oddly on the white, bitter lips. "Do thou step back," she commanded, endeavoring to pass. But Poganuc stirred not.

"Now thou angerest me," she cried, her deep eyes blazing. "Step thou back, fellow, else it will

be the worse for thee when thou returnest to my uncle."

The Indian bowed his head meekly, but still did not stir. Marcia, her indignant bosom panting, made a détour only to find his figure there in front of her, his impassive face set like a flint against any plan she might form as to progress. She drew herself up and looked at him with an expression from which had dropped the anger, to leave only amazement.

"Poganuc loves the Pale Face Maiden," said the Indian, slowly, after a pause; "dearer than all else does Poganuc hold her. She has been kind to him when all other pale-faces looked askance, and only thought to drive him to slave work in the fields his fathers owned. She has bound up his wounds, and smiled into his soul, and made the earth to blossom for him, and the sun to shine brighter. Poganuc would die for the Pale Face Maiden."

"Why do you obstruct my path then, and set at naught my word?" demanded Marcia.

"Poganuc hath a word to say," replied the Indian. "Listen, and Poganuc will tell thee. Not many nights ago Poganuc lay wrapped in his blanket looking at the stars, and amid so many, and all telling different things as sent by the Great Spirit, was one star; and it followed — followed Poganuc's eyes wherever he turned. And when at last it rested over the wigwam of the Pale Face

Maiden, Poganuc knew it was concerning her that the Great Spirit had somewhat to say, and before Poganuc could say aught to the Great Spirit, a voice whispered to him, 'Watch the Pale Face Maiden whom thou dost love better than thy life, and let her not wound her heart — the heart of a little child — to do evil.' And Poganuc has watched, and Poganuc is here now, not to let the Pale Face Maiden do evil."

Marcia laid her hands over her wild heart. Her temples throbbed to bursting; she swayed back and forth like a broken reed, but she cried in a steady voice, "Who art thou, fellow, to teach me my duty? Out of my way!" and she had yet the strength to wave an imperious hand.

"Poganuc is only a poor Indian, yet Poganuc will not stir from the place where the Great Spirit hath placed him. Listen, Pale Face Maiden; Poganuc hath still a tale for thine ear."

She had naught else to do but to listen.

"Another night; and beneath the moon Poganuc's heart was breaking, as the heart of the Pale Face Maiden is now breaking. The wounds of the Pale Face Maiden made by the cruel whip were speaking to Poganuc, and his brain was burning as if fire-water had washed over it. Long time Poganuc wandered over mountain and valley, thinking — thinking — and the wounds of the Pale Face Maiden were ever speaking to him. And at

last the Great Spirit told him what to do, and he sought the camp he doth frequent the most. And Poganuc gathers the chief and all the braves in a circle, and the white brother in the midst; and Poganuc, exulting in his joy, tells them what the Great Spirit has told him to do. And Poganuc speaks mostly to the white brother, for Poganuc knows he too loves the Pale Face Maiden better than life, and he would pass through fire and water to serve her. And Poganuc feels an arrow fly through his soul, for the white brother shakes his head and says, 'No,' in a voice that the black cloud makes when the storm bends the trees and he speaks to the Great Spirit up in the sky as Poganuc could not speak. But still Poganuc gives not up his purpose to kindle thirty and nine watch-fires over the wigwams in the beautiful village; a watch-fire for every blow of the cruel whip on the Pale Face Maiden, till the light of the moon shall shine on the dead faces of the maidens of the village, and it be swept to the ground."

"No — oh, no!" the words escape in horror from Marcia's lips, and she shrinks from him, and puts up both her hands to ward off a polluted thing.

"And still Poganuc means to do it; and Poganuc knows that the chief and the braves mean to do it; and to lay out the splendid war-dance and to polish up the spear and tomahawk to meet the

stick-that-speaks in the hands of the pale-faces. And then the white brother speaks; and all in the circle listen, for all love the white brother; his soul is an Indian soul; and he is our brother henceforh, and one with us, and no longer a pale-face. And he say — and every word sink into Poganuc's heart, and burn here." For the first time the Indian moved, and tapped his bronzed breast with his finger. "And Poganuc cannot get away from the speech of the white brother, although he tries to, for it burns — burns, like a thread of fire, till it has run like a network all through Poganuc's heart. And he say: '*No!* the Pale Face Maiden would not that this thing be done. The Pale Face Maiden followeth the Great Spirit, and knoweth better than we do, what the Great Spirit would have.' And Poganuc bows his head, for he knows he will not do this thing; and the chief and the braves know they will not lay out the war-dance, nor polish up the spear and the tomahawk to meet the stick-that-speaks of the pale-faces. And the Great Spirit speaks to the white brother and Poganuc alone, in a flame of fire and a loud noise that the black cloud makes when the storm bends the trees to do as the white brother has said. Poganuc hath finished."

Marcia threw her hands up over her head and would have fallen to the ground had not the Indian caught her. He set her gently down on

the green carpet of moss, and withdrew to a little distance where he stood motionless.

Marcia let fall her head to her knees, and the bands of fire that had bound her temples seemed suddenly to burst, and a torrent of tears swept her cheek. "Oh, God!" she cried, and wept on and on.

The wind had arisen and swayed the branches; the squirrels, deceived by the motionless figures, came out of their holes, into which they had been scared by the intruders, and chattered to each other; a serpent glided near, raising its head for hint of disturbance, then lowering its crest, slipped through the undergrowth, relieved of fear. Still the silent figure, its head on its knees, wept on and on; and still the Indian, like a bronze statue, watched and waited.

Suddenly one long-drawn cry rent the air, "*Poganuc!*" and swifter than the speediest runner, he bounded to her side.

"Lift me up to my feet, for truly the life has all gone from me."

He did as he was bid, then waited.

Marcia drew a long breath, and raised her poor face to the sky. It was white as death, and tear-stained; but no longer a thing to be feared.

"Thou hast taught me, thou, the poor Indian, as thou callest thyself," she said, in tones sweet and low, "what the voice of God has tried to get within my soul. My heart may be broken, but

it holds no place for the spirit of evil. See, Poganuc," she stretched forth her hands as sign and symbol of her words, "I hereby renounce all that the child of the Great Spirit must put behind her. May He" — she pointed to the patch of blue just visible between the waving tree-tops — "forgive me." Her lips refused to utter more.

Poganuc moved away. "I go now," he said briefly.

"Stay; thou hast heard me, and knowest that I was going to wreak vengeance by giving up to justice those unhappy men!"

"Poganuc tells naught he hears," said the Indian. "Poganuc loves the Pale Face Maiden, and Poganuc is not afraid now. Poganuc goes." With that he moved a few steps further.

"Stay!" called Marcia again. "Poganuc, I would that thou rememberest my words were wild, and my speech wicked."

"Poganuc remembereth naught that the Pale Face Maiden wishes him to forget," said the Indian. "The Pale Face Maiden speaketh to the Great Spirit, and the Great Spirit speaketh to the Pale Face Maiden. Poganuc is not afraid now," and he darted from the forest.

The leaves on the branches, swept by his hasty flight, quivered a few times, and then were still. Marcia set her face, the light of peace deep shining in her dark eyes, toward the cave.

"My cry and my hasty exit startled them," she said in her heart, and she took up her cross at once, to stand where she never thought to stand again, before the man whose love unsought, and now an unholy thing, had awakened her soul. But One went with her, whose going made it a way of peace. The rough, untrodden wilderness became the very gateway to the throne of God.

She went in hastily under the sheltering branches, whose enfolding protection appeared but to brood over the rough undergrowth, and threaded the great fissure to the cave's centre. Not lifting her eyes, but holding her heart close to the new Power it had acknowledged, she said: "Do not be startled. I was feeling ill. I have recovered, and have returned to tell thee all is well."

There was no response. The stillness, with its awful chill, smote her like a knife thrust. She lifted her eyes. The cave, with evidence of sudden departure on every hand, was empty.

XXII

LUCY LEET, whose indulgence by Madam Davenport made her take no small liberties with the minister's household, flies through the big parsonage. "Pastor Davenport — where is he? I cannot find him."

"Why this haste?" asked the gentle mistress, who dearly loved the girl, and hoped for her to tarry with the brightness that livened up the big house which, truth to tell, ofttimes gloomed the good woman's soul, that was ever longing for a daughter.

"Pastor Davenport — where is he?" Lucy's tone was impatient, and her stormy little face brooked no delay. "I have searched the study, and cannot find him. Oh, if you love me, dear Madam Davenport, tell me where he is." She was evidently in great distress.

The minister's wife hastened to answer. "He walketh in the garden," she said wonderingly, and thinking, as usual, of the boneset tea; but only for an instant, however, as previous encounters on this same subject had left her in no doubt as to Lucy's opinion of this herb.

Lucy sped like a deer down the garden length, where the minister, his hands behind him, was pacing back and forth with an untroubled face, conning some admirably turned sentences for his next sermon.

"Pastor Davenport," — Lucy even laid a hand on his sacred coat, — "the most dreadful thing has happened!" she cried. "Oh, I can scarcely live to tell it!"

"Calm thyself, child," said the minister, turning in displeasure, "and allow not thy young soul to be overwrought in this manner. Stay, I will not listen until thy speech is quiet, and thy mind clear," and he continued his walk.

"Oh, Pastor Davenport, dear Pastor Davenport," cried Lucy, struggling with her excitement, and only increasing it, "thou must listen." She ran after him, crying out: "See, I am quite calm. Do turn and hear me, Pastor Davenport," and she burst into tears.

The minister, quite perplexed and wholly overcome at the tears, turned to see her convulsed with grief—a very picture of woe before him in the garden path.

"Now, thou art so overcharged with distress that it is a case for a woman's hand," he began pityingly, and taking her arm, he was about to lead her to the house.

"Nay," said Lucy, sobbing her way to gusty

words. "I need — nothing; it is — Marcia — Marcia Sabine."

"Marcia?" repeated Parson Davenport, his face paling. What had befallen the Judges? "Tell me without crying, child, else I will surely leave thee to thyself," he commanded sternly.

"She was whipped at the whipping-post this very morning," said Lucy, with a confidence in his words on a study of his face.

The Rev. John Davenport staggered to a tree, and stood there, his pale, finely cut face overspread with amazement, over which incredulity slowly asserted itself.

"Thou art not telling me the truth," he said; "but it is the effect of an overwrought imagination, Lucy. Child, how often have I told thee that to indulge in the hearing of idle tales would sometime bring thee to sorrow. Now I discredit thee and thy story."

"My words are true," declared Lucy, stoutly, and bringing her plump, little hands smartly together, "and that thou canst prove by asking any on the market-place. Oh, Pastor Davenport," she cried in sad reproach, "where hast thou been all this while not to have known? Thou couldst have stopped it."

The old cry, — "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!"

The minister darted away from his tree. "Is 't

true? Lucy — what, Marcia Sabine?" He could do nothing but repeat the name in the shock. Then, "What did she?"

"I know not," said Lucy, shaking her head; "but it could have been naught that was wrong. Thou knowest that, Pastor Davenport."

"I know it." An awful dread that in some way it was connected with the fate of the Judges smote him, and he turned whiter, and his lips moved in prayer.

"It is for thee to find out what is the meaning of this dreadful thing," Lucy's voice called him back. "Oh, Pastor Davenport, do not tarry," she begged.

"Thou sayest well," said the minister, his face growing strangely set with a wrath each moment increasing. He strode by her on the narrow path, and over across the road to the mansion of William Jones.

"Now, in God's name, neighbor Jones," he cried, once within, "I beg thee to tell me, dost thou know aught of what took place on the market-place this morning?" His voice shook with wrath, and a light that blazed from his holy eyes told that there was a God in Israel to be feared by evil-doers. "The times be troublous indeed, that make possible the presence at the whipping-post of an innocent maiden, with soul purer than yours or mine." He had dropped, for the moment, the

dread of harm to the Judges, as the girl — the flower of the Colony — flashed before his mind appealingly.

"I have but just heard it," said Mr. Jones, with a troubled face. "It's naught to do with what we have unceasing anxiety about." He dropped his voice.

"Mr. Jones," his wife called, her rich paduasoy sweeping in undulating folds, and her little high-heeled slippers clicking rapidly down the long, polished stairway, "hast heard — thou didst say it, or my ears played me false — about this dreadful thing? Was Marcia — whipped? Oh, I cannot bear to speak the word." She was talking all the way down, and she now came up to them in the broad hall and laid her hand on her husband's arm.

"My dear," he said, "it is too true."

"It cannot be. Nay, I would not be so bold as to contradict aught thou sayest; but oh, what have been — how could it have happened?"

Mr. Jones motioned to the minister to proceed into the private room of the master of the house, the latch of which was in his hand. "I know not all — but," he began.

"Oh, *I* know it is something to do with those dreadful Judges," exclaimed Mrs. Hannah Jones, impulsively. "I blamed Marcia for giving them up — it was a base thing to do; but now I wish they had never stepped into New Haven Town,

for they have got her into trouble," she declared veering around inconsequently.

"Never," cried Mr. Jones, sharply, "the Judges had nothing to do with it. There you are wrong, my dear, and you had best go back to your tapestry work, and leave things you do not understand to minds that are fitted to grapple with them."

Mrs. Jones meekly turned away.

"It was something to do with Sylvy Bunce," vouchsafed her husband, glad he could get her thoughts from a dangerous subject, which the Lord might not have given her ability "to grapple with," but which she could tangle up most admirably.

"Sylvy Bunce!" exclaimed Mrs. Hannah Jones, turning back, "what, that detestable little daughter of the blacksmith?"

"My dear, my dear," reproved the rich merchant, condescendingly, "it becomes thee not to employ that tone in speaking of such an excellent citizen as thine and my townsman, Goodman Bunce."

"I said naught against him," replied Mrs. Jones, in astonishment. "It was the daughter of whom I spoke; I find nothing in her to like."

"True; I mistook thee," acknowledged her husband, who, finding his distraught mind getting a trifle mixed, now summarily retreated into his own apartment and closed the door hastily.

"I will go to Marcia," he announced when the

talk had been ended. "This matter amazeth me as much as it doth thee. But it is not safe to thee and the Cause to be seen near the 'Sperry Farm.' As for me, all the townspeople know I am needed often to inspect the work at my mill."

"Acquaint me speedily with all thou knowest," said the minister, more in the tone of a command than a plea. "Good brother Jones, I am very anxious for the child. Think of her brave spirit and the part she playeth." He wrung the hand extended him, and passed out. Woe be to thee now, Sylvy Bunce, for the holy man of God seeketh thee!

But Sylvy was not at home. No one could he find but her brother Mark.

Mark, the stolid, the impertubable, raised his sledge-hammer of a hand that could set such telling strokes by his father's anvil, and swore a terrible oath that Sylvy should reckon with him for the piece of work she had performed that morning. So the minister was forced to absorb much valuable time, while he labored with such an unrighteous spirit, at last extracting an unwilling promise to leave Sylvy to her pastor for religious treatment.

Meantime Lucy was not so nice in her idea of justice. Sylvy, in abject terror at the minister's approach, had slipped out of the back door and, confident of the support of Lucy Leet, since she

had witnessed her treatment of Marcia at their meeting in the market-place, she sped over to her at the Jones mansion. At any other time she would have quaked at this temerity.

Lucy, walking up and down the grand hall, saw through the little paned window that she was coming over the stepping stones.

"Show her in," she said to the serving-man.

The serving-man did as he was bidden, though with an uplift of his eyebrows. Lucy stopped, half way the hall's length, so that Sylvy had to advance and speak first.

"Oh, Lucy," she said, shuffling awkwardly over the thick carpet with its French flowers and ribbons trailing beauty like an earthly paradise, "you'll be awfully glad that Marcia Sabine's got her deserts. 'Twas mean and wicked and horrid— I think the same's you do, in her to give up those poor Judges. But she's got her pay now." Sylvy's little eyes gleamed hatefully. Secretly she had a conviction that the daughter of the Deputy Governor also had an eye on handsome Will Hepburn. "But she sha'n't have him either!" so the girl vowed.

"What!" exploded Lucy, a bright spot on either cheek. Then Sylvy saw her mistake, and turned to the big front door.

Lucy sprang after her. "You little, hateful, despisable minx you! there — and there — and

there!" She seized the two shoulders and shook them smartly. "Now take that story to the constable if you dare." She tried to tower above her, and though Sylvy was by no means tall, this could not be accomplished, strain as she might, for Lucy was sadly deficient in height. So she contented herself with a blazing indignation of face and a torrent of sharp words.

"When I think I can ever bring myself to speak to you," she cried hotly, "I despise myself. What are you — or what am I, for that matter — to dare to mention Marcia Sabine with aught but respect. No one of the girls can hold a candle to her, and that thou knowest; least of all, thee, Sylvy Bunce!" It was impossible for her to put more contempt into her voice than that now carrying it along, and Sylvy glanced helplessly at the big magnificent front door before which Lucy had now planted herself, vaguely wishing an earthquake or something magic might crack it to its foundation. Anything by which she might make her escape would be welcome, for she was now thoroughly frightened. The serving-man had discreetly retired, but only to an angle in the hall.

"And now," said Lucy, "thou shalt come with me, Sylvy Bunce." She flung wide with ease the massive door that had looked to Sylvy's terrified eyes so unyielding, "Come on!"

"Where to?" cried Sylvy, her tongue scarce

able to compass the two words, and her pale blue eyes protruding in fright.

"Come on! If thou dost not, be sure I will take means to make thee," commanded Lucy, in an undaunted tone. "Benson," — her keen eyes had seen the rotund figure behind the high-backed chair in the angle, — "Benson, see that this girl obeys me."

"With all my heart, sweet mistress," said Benson, who dearly loved the little guest; and setting his black silk stockings on a lively run down the soft carpeted hall he swiftly prepared to obey.

Sylvy, seeing naught but danger in the rear, dashed out to Lucy on the big flat stone. "I thought thou wouldst come," said the Chief Magistrate's daughter, coolly. "Benson, it might be as well for thee to walk behind me, an' I might require somewhat at thy hand."

"I do not want to go, I am not going," declared Sylvy. "Where are you going to take me?" all in the same breath, and trying to dodge them both.

"Raise but thy voice to one cry and I will summon the constable and give thee up," declared Lucy, positively; "for I know thou hast done enough for acquaintance with the whipping-post, to which thou hast betrayed my friend. *Yes, my very dearest friend,*" she repeated, her eyes which had sparkled with anger now softening with the tears she longed to shed.

Sylvy, having nothing within her soul to uphold her, cringed, and helplessly fell into a sullen step by Lucy's side, the black silk stockings that enclosed Benson's stout limbs coming directly after.

Lucy walked straight across the road to the minister's house. Sylvy, who had seen nothing less dreadful than a call on one of the deputies or the constable, gave a sigh of relief. Still she quaked visibly.

The Rev. John Davenport had returned from his fruitless call upon her, and received her gravely in his big study, Lucy following triumphantly in her wake, after first dismissing Benson with a condescending smile.

"I have brought her," said Lucy, which was scarcely necessary, "and she will tell thee all, Pastor Davenport."

"It will be a sorry tale, I feel sure," said the minister, grave yet at sight of the face and figure before him. "We had best have it over with at once." And the story was soon laid bare; Sylvy, escape being now impossible, rushing through all the details with a sickening fidelity to the truth that now, like many another lost gem, seemed the only thing of value in the world. Besides, she couldn't lie any more, with the minister's clear eyes upon her. So she told the whole affair, sparing neither herself nor Lucy, whose speech to

Marcia was reported, and the allusion that Sylvy had made to it.

When she came to that part of the episode, Pastor Davenport turned puzzled eyes on the daughter of the Deputy Governor.

"I was hateful to Marcia," blurted Lucy, with downcast eyes. "I writ her a letter too, a cruel letter," — she struggled with her tears and twisted her plump little hands till they were red and miserable, — "for what she had done in giving information to the English spies about the poor Judges."

The minister stirred uneasily in his great chair. "Child, who art thou who judgest?" he reproved sternly. "See what mischief thy tongue hath wrought, and thy conduct also."

Lucy's soft hair escaped from her muslin cap and fell about her round cheeks, as she bowed her head upon her breast. "I grieve," she said, in a plaintive voice that went straight to the minister's heart. "But something must be done with her," she added quickly, as her head came up, for action restored her to her element, and now there seemed to be a call for it; and she pointed at Sylvy.

"As there was public punishment of Marcia," said the minister, slowly, "for a thing she was guiltless of, there must be a public confession by Sylvy, not of the details of speech," he said hastily. "It sufficeth for Sylvy to say that she angered and insulted Marcia, who did naught to her; and that

the overthrow was purely an accident, or, at most, brought on by Sylvy's perverseness in blocking Marcia's way. To say publicly that you told a lie, Sylvy Bunce," he said, bringing his stern eyes to bear upon her, "is now your punishment. Whether there will be any other, is not for me to say. And may God have mercy on you for that black falsehood!"

Meanwhile Mr. William Jones suddenly concluded not to visit the "Sperry Farm" that day. Riding out to the town limit, he caught his name uttered by one of two men, ahead of him in the bridle path, to the fellow in advance.

"They do say that that 'ere rich merchant William Jones knows as much as any other man in the whole Colony, except Parson Davenport, about them air Reg'cides." He dropped behind, thankful to have been unobserved, and turning his horse's head, when a convenient place arrived, he came swiftly home. He had had a watch set on his steps, and must hereafter employ another messenger to the "Sperry Farm," or go there secretly.

XXIII

THE dim light in which Breedon and Crowne captured Jed Beetle, and were in turn outwitted by him, had disclosed none of his identity. But in the morning sunlight, as they lay bound with the deerskin thongs, the first good look they had of his lantern jaws, and long, ungainly figure, filled them with horror, and made their flesh creep.

"The fellow whose crown piece we got," whispered Breedon, in an awful tone, rolling along with difficulty to gain his companion's ear, his hands and feet bound with extra lengths of thong and secured by special knots. "Now it is all up with both of us!" ending with dreadful execrations.

Crowne's teeth chattered in his agony of fright. His eyes rolled in his head, and his heart seemed to cease its beating, as visions of the pine stake and other pleasant divertisements, by which the Indians were known to amuse themselves over special victims, swam before his eyes.

What they had done to the man that had so crazed his brain, as now they knew in a flash had been the case with Jed, gave to them, if to any one,

this distinction. They surely were special victims, and their fate was in the hands of a man bereft of his wits, and thirsting for revenge; for the Indians would do to the letter what he commanded — that they could see.

Breedon, fierce in his agony, where the other was made speechless, foamed at the mouth and raved with as loud a tongue as he dared, close to the ear of the other wretch. Not looking well in print, the matter that escaped him must be omitted; the chief thought through it was, — "Escape — rouse yourself to plan with me an escape." Wild thought! He knew by one glance of Jed's eye, and another glance at the Indian captors, who were obedient to Jed's eye, that hope was dead. They were special victims indeed, and as such were to be guarded with special care.

Jed kept up this pleasing delusion, knowing that a wholesome fear was necessary, not only of him, but of the Indians, to be retained after it was best to let the prisoners go. This was not because they had injured him, for he had recognized them at the first wink as the men who had come beneath the public stocks on the market-place, and reviled him, swearing broadly that he was the thief who had stolen their money. It was not for this reason, although he had a dim idea that when it was safe for the Judges' Cause that these worthies should visit New Haven Town, he might some way

— somehow — compel their confession of his innocence. He would never set his foot there; that had been sworn. And Jedediah Beetle, knowing himself, knew that his vow was to be unbroken; but Farmer Sperry could be trusted with the story by and by, not at present. Perchance he might counsel letting the prisoners go their way. Jed knew better than to allow them to escape. He felt that they had retraced their steps after leaving New Haven Town to become pursuivants of the hunted Judges. And as he did not care to swell the number of this class of workers, already large enough, with such a dangerous couple, Jed decided that the welfare of the Colony, as well as the safety of the fugitives, demanded as the only resource that these two prisoners be kept in the heart of the wilderness far from the haunts of men, at least until the extreme excitement had passed. "The Lord ud find it hard to forgive me, ef I let such varmints loose; and Miss Marcia, O Lord! ef anythin' happened to them Judges!" Jed had enjoyed too long Poganuc's counsel not to understand himself.

As for Scranton, he was billeted in Jed's mind for the same fate — retirement in the care of the Indians, all three of the men to be sedulously preserved from harm, to be fed and cared for; but to be watched — watched — watched — as prisoners. They were to be separated, for Jed wisely

concluded one rascal half conquered when deprived of the evil inspiration of his comrades. So we must leave them for better company.

Marcia threw herself, wild-eyed and breathless, before her uncle. He was leaning heavily against a tree on the edge of the houseplace, as if the life had gone out of him. "He has heard — oh, they are captured!" — no thought of her own suffering and insult borne on the previous day, of which as yet no story (for news travelled slowly in those days) had met the Sperry family. Will's lips had been sealed by her request, on their ride home; the physical agony each moment had given her had been drowned in the ecstatic spirit that possessed her soul.

"Uncle, they are *gone!*" gasped Marcia, through pallid lips, as she seized his arm.

He turned an ashen face to her, his eyes had retreated in his head, and he seemed not to know her. Marcia, shocked at his appearance, felt a sharp pang as she realized the fall of a strong prop to her hope for the rescue of the Judges from the cruel fate that seemed to have overtaken them. She tried to convey some notion of her words to his dazed brain. She shook his arm. "They are *gone!* Oh, uncle, cannot you understand — the *cave is empty!*" glancing fearfully around to see if treacherous footsteps approached or dangerous ear listened.

"Girl, what have you done?" Richard Sperry's mind woke up, and his eyes came back and searched her face with a lightning gleam of indignant fury. Marcia drew herself away. For a moment she forgot, in her agony for the fugitives, all about the day just past. That was as thoroughly gone from her mind as though it had never been. She had lived an eternity since, in her soul; and on the mountain-top, where her spirit was now, she forgot to look down to the low and dark valley it had forsaken.

"What, uncle?"

"That one in my family should bring it disgrace." Farmer Sperry's tone cut like a knife, bringing remembrance, and with it a revelation that she had lost her uncle, dearer than father, since he was in his English grave, laid there when she was but a babe. All the breath in her body seemed to desert her, and she stood feebly there, quite spent.

"The whipping-post! Can I live to speak it?" Then came an execration, the first she had ever heard from those good lips, to be followed by a torrent of furious invective, each word of which cut deep to the girl's quivering heart.

"May I speak?" at last she asked, when there was a pause for lack of breath. "God, help me!" Her soul was staying itself on Him, obscured to the colonist by the storm of his furious anger.

"Speak, an' thou canst," thundered Richard Sperry, spurning her by look and gesture. Then he lashed himself up to a second fury, before she had said a dozen words.

"Uncle, it was this way, I—" and the storm raged higher and higher.

Will Hepburn rushed across the houseplace, led by the awful voice that seemed to ring above the trees of the forest. He plunged to Marcia's side, and threw his young strong arm around her. "Now if thou wert not an older man, and, until this moment, one whom I could respect, by the heaven above me, I'd knock thy head to the ground, and let thee bite the dust." It was fury matching fury.

"Will," moaned Marcia. She cast her beautiful, hunted eyes up to his, so far above her face. How blue they were; but oh, how dangerous for the man before them. "Do not quarrel — *dear* Will."

He quivered in every nerve, but his lips were set, and the dangerous look in his eyes grew deeper.

Richard Sperry, no anger abated, bellowed at him.

"Dost know what 'twas about — the trouble of yesterday?" He could not bring his tongue to utter the word "whipping-post."

"No; but I trust Marcia. She will tell me when —" He did not finish.

"She will tell me now," cried Farmer Sperry, "or, by my God, she will never set foot in yon

house again." He pointed to the farm-house smiling in the morning sunshine.

Both of Will's arms are around her now. She is enfolded in a human refuge, as well as on the mountain-top with God. She let fall her poor, tired head on the best of earthly resting places — a good man's heart; while he, in the bliss of this moment, feels his anger die down, and the storm in his breast has spent its fury.

"Marcia," he whispered in her ear, "it is best to tell thine uncle all. Canst thou do it now, dear?"

She assented, and raised her head wearily. "Do thou withdraw, Will," she said.

He gave an anxious glance at Farmer Sperry, but she waved him off with a smile. "My words shall not anger him;" and obeying her, as needs he must, he went off, but only to a distance beyond ear-shot, if a cry should be raised.

"Uncle," said Marcia, "I will tell thee all." And she laid before him the whole occurrence, making it as light for Sylvy as she could. When she had finished his black brow alarmed her, and the gesture of his strong right hand. "I could not tell the words she said to me," said Marcia, "in the public ear."

"No," said Farmer Sperry, anger leaping from his black eyes, "thou couldst not," thinking of the reference to Will Hepburn. "It would have been shameless to repeat them. Hadst thou done

it, thou oughtest to be made to hold audience with the whipping-post. But I must have it out with Blacksmith Bunce." Again that gesture of the good, strong right hand.

"Uncle, uncle!" cried Marcia. Then her woman's tact came to her aid. "Let Will have that part; it will suit him better," she said.

Her uncle's hand came slowly down toward his side. A vision of what he was, — a pillar of the church — a good, law-abiding colonist — a quiet citizen, known and loved by all — slowly the light of reason was dissipating the storm of fury in his breast. And Will? Yes, the blow that nearly deprived Richard Sperry of that reason had brought about his dearest wish; yes, Will was clearly the one to avenge Marcia's wrongs now. The uncle must stand one side for him.

"No, I could not speak the words!" said Marcia; "no maiden could. And then, uncle, the Judges! Had I mentioned what she said, and of Lucy Leet, my part had been betrayed. I could not risk it."

Like a flash came back to sweep over his soul the part she had played to this bitter ending. It ingulfed him, did this memory, with the other remembrance of his cruel words to her; each passing like so many knife thrusts he had hurled at her. Ah! would they never end their passing? Could he bear it?

"Marcia, I had forgotten thy part, brave girl," he moaned, all the bitterness fled, his head sinking to his breast. She seized the moment to revive him. "Uncle — nay, father," and she ran to him and pillowed his head in her young arms, — "the Judges — they are in danger — perhaps captured — *the cave is empty!*"

"Ha! say not so!" All the old patriotic fervor is rekindled. He looks up, a man once more, prepared to act.

"And Will must now be told," said Marcia, slowly. "It is his right. The secret is safe with him now."

"The secret is safe with him now, since thou wilt guide him," said Farmer Sperry.

XXIV

THE two generals gazed blankly into each other's faces, at Marcia's cry and sudden disappearance. "A signal,—can it be?" said General Goffe, through pale lips, as the white head of the aged man, raised at the shrill note, sank again to its pillow. "We are discovered! God wills it that we take refuge once more in weary flight!" He raised the attenuated form to his shoulder, secreted such things as he could — the letter, his diary, and writing materials — on his person, and crouched out with his burden through a smaller fissure at the back of the cave, to elude all watchful eyes drawn by that wild cry, and presently they were lost in the depths of the wilderness.

Occasionally he looked down into the valley and traced the smoke curling from the Sperry farm-house. "Not there," he said through set lips, when the old man querulously begged for rest beneath a roof. "Any place but there would be safe, though in the teeth of wolves. And we must remove from this spot. Providence Hill it has been; alas! no longer can we call it so! My father,"

he glanced tenderly down upon the trembling figure, bent with sorrow and fatigue, leaning on his strong arm, "canst embolden thy soul to attempt a brave thing with me? We must strike for liberty through yon town." He pointed in the direction where fair New Haven's turreted meeting-house stood upon her market-place.

"Art mad, William, to attempt it?" exclaimed the old man.

"No more mad than to remain here to starve in the wilderness," replied General Goffe. "Hands once gentle have forsaken us, after accustoming us to their bounty. We have naught with which to sustain life, and the end cannot be far off, in any case."

"I hear naught of pursuer," said General Whalley, lifting an anxious ear. "Perchance the signal was not understood. We may be safe here."

"Alas!" said General Goffe, "we must not delude ourselves. And the moments are flying—a little more delay, and all attempt to escape may be lost." He fairly dragged General Whalley along now, with speedy strides that precluded conversation.

Marcia was just speaking, "The secret is safe with Will now, and he will help us to aid them," when the two fugitives, threading the brow of the wooded hill, took their last look of the curling smoke above Farmer Sperry's house. The next

instant, and they were fairly launched from Providence Hill, and on their perilous break for liberty.

Once, a wandering tinker, ignorant of Judges and Regicides, as well as of all else save his trade, fell in with them and shared some scraps of bread from his wallet. They blessed him, and passed on, though he would have liked to detain them. And that night they halted under the very shadow of the town, for the strength of the aged man was ebbing low. "I can go no farther," he said, and sank down.

General Goffe, who had travelled slowly to save all possible strength for the night journey, which should carry them through the town and thus accomplish the most perilous part of the journey, was dismayed, but he covered his feelings and said lightly, "You have eaten nothing save the crust that yon good tinker shared with us. I must forage about. Perchance I can discover somewhat to sustain thee with."

"Nay, nay, William," cried General Whalley, and he laid restraining hands on the other's coat. "I protest, thou shalt not leave me. I should die surely then." He clung to him, and General Goffe, although dismayed to the limit of endurance, had no heart to repulse him. So they "pitched their tent" where they were, homeless and shelterless, with God above them, but no earthly friend

to whom they could apply for support in their need.

Once during the long night, when the stillness was broken by the voice of the elder man, as he turned uneasily on the hard ground to ask, "May we not apply to our friend, that holy man of God?" General Goffe had replied sternly, "Never; we have brought him into danger enough."

"True, my mind retains not as it should all that we have cost him," said General Whalley with a sigh. Then he turned back and sought to lose himself in sleep.

"We will surrender ourselves first," declared General Goffe to himself, as he had often determined, "before we will subject him, who by his undaunted courage has saved us until now, to a further trial. A new suspicion pointed at him for harboring us would bring him ruin."

At last hunger compels them to do what cold prudence would have forbidden. The early dawn found General Whalley refreshed by sleep and with a better stock of strength, and General Goffe, though with the direst misgivings, concluded that they must sally forth from their retreat, before the old man became too faint from lack of food to make the attempt. Accordingly, keeping as well as possible within the wood that in some places crept up near the town, they picked up the thread of their journey again, and struck

off toward the Neck Bridge, thinking to get into the shelter of some other settlement, removed from the dangerous vicinity of New Haven Town. General Goffe had provided himself with a generous cudgel, and one less weighty that could be used as a staff for the elder man.

They proceeded unmolested for quite a distance, having the good fortune to meet no one who recognized them. Suddenly the trained ear of General Goffe caught the sound of hoof-beats down the road, still a good distance removed, but approaching rapidly. He essayed to draw his companion to one side for shelter, but unfortunately they were in the open, all the space on either side of the road having been cleared with the exception of a few large trees.

"We will keep a bold front," he whispered to General Whalley; "it is the only thing that can save us."

A few more hoof-beats; they struck upon the ears of the fugitives like echoes from the scaffold at Charing Cross where their martyr brethren paid the penalty for devotion to the Cause of Liberty. The clouds of dust rose and fell, almost obscuring the vision. The horse and his rider are close upon them, are nearly by; the Judges, not glancing up, go steadily onward, when "*Halt!*" rings out in loud, warning note, and General Whalley and General Goffe look up into the face of Constable

Kimberly. And the knell is about to strike the end.

"I demand your surrender!" Kimberly shouted at them. He was a good-sized man, with a big voice, and his eyes danced at the easy prospect, — only cudgels, and he with his warrant, and the authority of his presence, and mayhap a pistol or two under his doublet to emphasize that authority. But cudgels in the hands of Generals Whalley and Goffe mean more than the same sticks of wood in ordinary hands; and so the poor constable finds out.

The aged Judge, who had sunk in pitiful weakness the night before to the earth for repose, has at the sniff of a battle straightened up now to a warrior's pose. His eyes were on fire, his cheek undaunted. He clutches the cudgel with a valiant grip, only waiting the supreme moment of attack.

"Dost thou so?" replied General Goffe, coolly, and without changing countenance he regards the officer steadily. "And suppose we decline to comply with your demand? What then?"

"Then I shall force you to give yourselves up, for *I* am Constable Kimberly," pompously declared that officer. Drawing one foot out of stirrup he prepares to throw his leg over the saddle, but halts a bit to give the words their proper effect.

"In that case we shall be obliged to defend ourselves, when we hope to make no mean showing" —and each of the Judges is behind a big tree, already intrenched in one of nature's fortresses.

"Nonsense!" Kimberly probably said to himself, for he proceeds to descend from his horse, and to attack. From all accounts, most especially his own appearance, he got enough. At any rate, he wanted no more dancing around two big trees that sheltered such formidable antagonists; and vowing the air blue with vengeance, he presently beats a retreat, his unused warrant in his pocket, and springs to his horse to dash into town for aid. "We'll have you yet!" He shakes a fist triumphantly at the Judges, strikes spurs deeply, and clatters down the road.

General Goffe looks admiringly at the old warrior, who exclaimed, "That was good, William," and his kindling eye said more than words. "That brush has put new life into me."

"It was good, indeed, while it lasted," assented General Goffe, with a little laugh. Capture and death might stare them in the face, as they did; but a sight of the years dropping from the loved form before him, and the weakness they carried in their train, lifted his spirits buoyantly. And again he laughed, this time as gleefully as a boy, and General Whalley joined.

"But it ill becomes us to tarry," said the younger

man, suddenly, an anxious, hunted look overspreading his features; "we must get over all the distance possible in the shortest time to find good cover, as Constable Kimberly will find no difficulty in securing helpers."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when they heard the pursuers coming; for the officer gathered up what forces he could first command, pressing them into the service, willing or unwilling. And now on they came, all mounted, and making the breezes ring with their confident shouts.

General Goffe stopped abruptly and took bearings, weighing chances for escape with critical nicety. Neck Bridge stretched just before them. On either hand the bank was low and bordered a salt marsh. The bridge was low-set, and the river, at its highest, not more than eight feet. Now, at this hour of the day, — high noon, — the water was low.

"There is no other way." General Goffe pointed to the bridge. "We must get under it. It would be madness to cross to that thicket," pointing off to a short distance, "and when there, it might afford us only a poor name for a shelter. Come — " he descended into the stream, and held out his hand.

General Whalley, although he longed for another brush, stepped in after him, and under the stringers of the bridge they place themselves.

"If this poor screen saves us from the wrath of men, we will bless God that we covered no more distance," whispered Goffe. "Hush, now may God defend us! they are close upon us!"

Thud, thud! Would the hoof-beats above their heads — only the bridge-plank between — never cease to beat? Again the echoes from the scaffold, along which has passed the train of martyred Judges, to which will soon be added these two hearts, no more to feel the blows of cruel fate!

A mist closes in before their eyes; they have ceased to feel, or to hear aught save those echoes and their own knell; and long after the last hoof-beat has passed down the road, they still are sure they are pounding over their heads.

It is only by a supreme effort that General Goffe arouses himself at last, and touches the shoulder leaning against him as they stand crouched under the slimy timbers. "The danger is passed for this time," he whispered. "I can scarcely believe it. Now we must fly while they are on the wrong pursuit."

With the mud dripping from their feet and limbs — for they stood in water up to the middle — they emerged to the bank; and scarcely choosing their way, but instinctively avoiding the direction taken by the constable and his posse, they struck off desperately with wild, uneven plunges, trusting

only to God's mercy. If He willed that they should be taken, His will must be done. But until they had that word from Him, they would fight for their lives with the confidence of servants of the Almighty.

XXV

THEY plunged with uneven footsteps now, not of fear — death could not bring them that. But death stared in their hunted, starved faces, and pointed with mocking finger to the black abyss of shameful indignity to be heaped upon them before the relief of death became possible. And they hoped never to be taken alive; but that God in His mercy would in some way strike them breathless before they should see the shores of England as prisoners.

"He will never survive the arrest," breathed General Goffe many times through that weary flight; "thank God for that!"

Skulking here and there under every protecting bit of forest where it hugged the town, dashing across the open when it must be traversed, lying low, with panting breath that prayed for death in any shape so that it took them as free men, it is marvellous that no man's hand was laid on them that day.

At nightfall the last step had been taken.

Down by the creek, its four porches setting

their distinguished fronts to the gaze of the passer-by and the consequent envy of each, was the grandest house in New Haven Town, save that of Mr. William Jones and the one belonging to Pastor Davenport. Captain Isaac Allerton, a worthy seaman, chose, when his foot trod the land, to step in a high and mighty fashion. Nothing was too good as offset to the cribbed and confined deck of his clumsy little sailing vessel. The house inside was as fine as without, highly finished in solid oak and of the best workmanship. Wines and good liquors filled the huge cellar, all sorts of curious and elegant manufactures brought from his foreign cruises adorned the mansion. He died, lost at sea; the usual story, just as he was about to enjoy it all, meaning the voyage to be his last.

And again the sea claimed a victim who had an eye to the enjoyment of the grand house in the person of Captain Eyers, son-in-law to the worthy Captain Allerton; and the little widow settled down at last alone in it, with all her earthly goods untouched, but her life despoiled.

She was herself unspoiled, and no sooner had she taken the measure of the new conditions thus suddenly thrust upon her than she rose to meet them. And thereafter gentle little Mrs. Eyers was mistress of herself and of the grand mansion, the beloved benefactor of those in need, and the admired of the town. For her grace, elegance of

person, and richness of attire only served to mark for notice the thorough nobility of her character, that gave the true lustre to these accomplishments. It was quite the genteel thing to know her; to be reckoned amongst her friends was something to boast of.

She had long been fond of Marcia Sabine, taking a fancy to her at sight of the flower-like face under the brown hood one cold winter day in the fireless meeting-house, and in a tone more a command than a request she had signified to Farmer Richard Sperry her desire to have the little girl brought to her Sabba-day house to spend that nooning. So Marcia was brought and piled with cake much too rich for her, to be eaten from a china dish of quaint design, which happily occupied so much attention that the indigestible compound fell into slow neglect.

"You do not eat your cake, child," Madam Allerton had said, quite piqued. "I am astonished at that, and I would not dare tell my good Betty Slater, who made it, how you slighted it."

Marcia picked up her cake-slice hastily. "The plate is so pretty, madam," she said, with eyes only for its entrancing surface.

"You shall have it," declared Madam Eyers, generously. "Eat your cake, child, and when the afternoon service is done, run over here and it shall be ready for you to carry home."

"Oh, madam," cried Marcia, her beautiful dark eyes uplifted to the kind face, "my uncle would never allow me to take the pretty plate."

"Nonsense, child!" exclaimed little Madam Eyers, "do you not know every one thinks it best to let me have my way? The plate is yours." Thus their acquaintance began.

And as often thereafter as Marcia could come into town, she must perforce drink tea and remain over night at the "Allerton Mansion," or at least sit an hour or two with her kind friend. There was always "Marcia's room" with its gay-flowered chintz hangings, the big four post bedstead with tester of the same material, the long mirrors in which the girl could not help but see her growing beauty, the carved oaken furniture upon the thick soft carpet of bewildering flowers and vines running up and down its length. To this room Marcia would hie when Farmer Sperry or Will helped her down from the pillion, and left her for such nightly visit; and taking off her outer garments she would fold or hang them neatly away, with the precision of a New England maid brought up to small economies, then smooth her hair under her muslin cap, and go down to the grand drawing room, where, sitting up in state in a high-backed chair, Madam Eyers would receive her, and tell her to draw up her cricket to her side and be comfortable.

Of late Madam Eyers had been unhappy and lonely; for Marcia's visit to her mother's kin at New Netherland had been lengthened beyond even the margin set in the good lady's mind, who knew what the magnetism of the young girl could do. "No doubt they desire her company," she would exclaim to some chance visitor, "but so do we need her at home," she would add with a touch of asperity. "And think of the weeks she has been absent!" Then the mistress of the "Allerton Mansion" would raise her embroidered black gloves, those fine ones, brought on his last voyage by Captain Eyers, in token of astonishment that she could have borne so well the loss of her young friend.

And after Marcia did at last return to the "Sperry Farm," only one paltry visit of a night had been the happiness of the grand mansion. No entreaties could bring her again, for the cry was of the great need of her presence at home, till Madam Eyers, who on previous occasions had tilted with Goodwife Sperry for this same reason, determined with exasperation that she would never, no never, entreat the woman again for the presence of Marcia, who, she was quite sure, was being worked to death at home; but would send direct to Farmer Sperry, whom she found amenable to reason, and a gentleman, for he gave her what she asked.

And now these last days Madam Eyers was restless enough. All the talk floating about concerning Marcia Sabine's betrayal of the poor hunted Judges had rested at her door with the lightest of breaths. To be sure, it had found lodgement, but in the mildest fashion; the bringer of the news softening, as indeed she must, for Madam Eyers's ear, the part the girl had played. As for the episode at the whipping-post, no one dared to tell her that. So the elegant little lady embroidered, and read a little, with painstaking care spelling out the words in some wonderful illuminated missal from foreign lands, or rearranged her cabinets of treasures from every quarter of the globe, of which she was very proud, or attended to her poor pensioners, or interviewed with majestic importance the retinue of her servants whom, notwithstanding her size and gentleness, she managed with a high hand. And all through it she fussed and fretted for Marcia. At last she wrote an imperative note to Farmer Sperry for the girl to come to her. "I am sick," she wrote ("which is quite true, for I shall die if I do not have her," she said to herself), "and need her immediate presence." And she despatched her black serving-man on her swiftest horse, as if summoning the physician.

This was the day following the flight from the cave. "You must go, Marcia," said her uncle, hoarsely, "else she will be out here." He flapped

the letter till a delicate scent of lavender pervaded the kitchen. "Susannah," turning to his wife, "the child must go; for, sick though she may be, Madam Eyers will follow her request, an' we do not oblige her."

Goodwife Sperry had been kept carefully from all knowledge of the whipping-post incident by her husband; but he quaked in his soul with the conviction that the next Sabbath would bring it out, for all bulletins of news were regularly unfolded in the Sabba-day housen. Still he hoped to have his conferences with Pastor Davenport and Mr. William Jones — these he had held within the past twenty-four hours, jointly on Marcia's account and the Judges — result before that time in her complete public vindication. But although the farmer's wife was ignorant of this last episode, she had quite enough to rankle her mind at thought of the part enacted by Marcia in betraying the hunted Judges into the hands of the Englishmen that night of the unfortunate merrymaking. And her spleen rose with constant brooding over the matter, till she sometimes wished the girl back in New Netherland, never to return.

So now she said wearily: "I'm sure I do not care where Marcia goes, since she has chosen to set up her ideas of right against those who are her elders and superiors. I wash my hands of her."

"I will see Will, and tell him to take thee into

town, Marcia," said Farmer Sperry. He managed to pass her on his way to the door. "Come without, I would speak to thee." And he hurried out.

Marcia followed him.

"Do not worry," her uncle whispered. "Will can take your place, and carry the food to the cave. They will probably return there," he added hastily, at sight of her face. "If not, Pastor Davenport or Mr. Jones will find them; they are both searching, thou knowest."

"Never — no, never!" cried Marcia, in smothered anguish. "They will surrender before they appeal to Pastor Davenport, and they will take care to keep out of his way. Many a time has General Goffe told me so. Oh, there is no hope, no hope!" Her young voice died down to a knell of despair.

"Marcia, Marcia, my girl," cried her uncle, desperately, "if thou givest up, all is lost. See, perchance if thou goest to New Haven Town to visit Madam Eyers thou canst learn somewhat of the whereabouts of the Judges."

Marcia started forward, "Thinkest thou so, uncle?" her eyes dilating.

"I do."

"Then summon Will; I cannot go too quickly." And she dashed within, made hasty preparation, and soon stood at the horse-block in fevered impatience to be off.

In a minute, that seemed to her an hour, Will appeared leading the horse, and reverently lifted her to the pillion, sprang himself into the saddle, and they were off.

Madam Eyers received her in bed, — much against her will, but to carry out the fiction of her illness, — bolstered up against the pillows, and with lighted candles, for it was turning dusk. Set well within the shadows caused by the tester hangings, she eluded the keen glance she expected from the dark eyes. But Marcia's mind was busied to the exclusion of all matters save the one that burned deep within her very soul; so after paying her respects to the mistress of the mansion, who fairly wriggled in delight at the success of her scheme, she sat down by the bedside, dutifully, to make herself agreeable.

"And now, Marcia — no, don't tell me the news, —" Marcia had no intention of so doing; indeed, she knew none, save the one supreme knowledge eating her heart out, — "for all I want is to hear about yourself and to see your sweet face. Eunice," to a serving-woman in one corner, "bring over the candle, the brightest one, that I may see my dear heart."

But as the candle was brought, and, held at the proper angle, flashed forth its revealing power, she saw her mistake. Her own countenance, blooming with perfect health, stood out as well as Marcia's.

"There, there, that is enough!" she exclaimed hastily, waving serving-woman, candle, and all away. "Stupid creature, you are spilling the grease all over the bedspread! Do thou set down the candlestick where it was, and leave the apartment." She had no time to observe all the inroads on the girl's face, the trail the agony of the past days had left, but, as she sank back in a vexed way to her pillows, an intuition that Marcia was not looking well struck her forcibly.

"I protest, dear child," and her little hand sought Marcia's larger but more shapely one, "thou art killing thyself in that stuffy farm-house kitchen. I must speak to thine uncle about it. But never mind, I mean to have thee for a long visit." She laughed gleefully now as a child who has played a successful trick and nestled contentedly on her downy bed. "Oh, I didn't send for thee for just one night, Marcia, mark thee! It will be one while before thou dost get free."

Marcia, in her dismay, had no words, thinking it better for her prospects to avoid opposition.

"Now what can I do for thee, dear Madam Eyers," she begged gently, "to relieve thy sickness?"

"Hem," Widow Eyers thought busily. She had quite forgotten her illness.

"Eunice might get me the cordial from the

buffet in the dining room," she said, after racking her brains for something by which to bolster the fiction till the morrow. Then it would be quite natural that a good night's rest should find her completely restored.

"I will get it," said Marcia, glad to find in action a respite from dangerous conversation, and blessing the absence of Eunice.

"Oh, I do not need it," protested Madam Eyers, clinging to her hand; "I had forgotten I sent the stupid thing out. I am better now. Stay, Marcia, you are all I want." She tried to draw her back to her seat.

"Nay, I must get the cordial," said Marcia, who could be firm on occasion; "I will soon return." And she hurried out, selected from the buffet the decanter she supposed was required, a thin, long-necked delicate affair and, with a tiny glass to match, started to return.

The long French windows before her excluded the dusky nightfall now approaching fast, so that she saw naught without; but the light of a row of candles burning at their brightest, in the high silver candlesticks on the carved buffet, brought every line and expression of her face into view to one glancing in. A sudden noise, slight enough, but noticeable for its quality of stealth, made her look instinctively at the long stretch of little panes nearest to her. She turned away, thinking nothing

of it; but a second stir, with the same arresting quality, made her pause and listen. "I will fasten that door; it must be ajar," and setting down the decanter and glass on the buffet she passed across the apartment. A face had been suddenly withdrawn from the outer surface; she was sure of that, she could have sworn it, and throwing wide the door she passed resolutely out, to stand face to face with General Goffe. A limp figure lay prone on the floor of the porch.

"We are on thy mercy," said a hollow voice. She would not have known it for the one so lately controlling her soul. "Let the end be swift. This is all I plead."

"Mercy? oh!" cried Marcia, with bated breath, in an agony lest the servants should hear, and with no understanding of his words; "oh, sir, it is mercy for myself I crave. My cry, oh, I can never forgive myself!" She clasped her hands in an anguish of spirit lest they die before her very face, they were so exhausted.

"Your signal. I understand," said General Goffe, dryly; "the only wonder is that it has not been followed up to our capture. Oh, the irony of fate to have brought us to *you* again! I had rather die by the hand of the lowest menial of the Colony."

"My signal!" Marcia swept her thought past the contempt, nay, the loathing, that his piercing

glance burned on her face, to utter again in the widest-eyed astonishment, "my *signal!*"

It was impossible to think it a part she was acting. Truth, eternal truth, sat on her brow and in her clear eyes. But General Goffe would not drop one contemptuous glance.

"I cried — O God — I cried," began Marcia, her white, transparent skin flaming with the light that to the hunted man seemed not of earth. "I will tell thee all. Thou art a holy man, and will not utterly despise a poor, untaught girl whose quiet heart became disturbed while she was unconscious of it. Thou art a holy man, a saint of God, and no more to me now than the angels of heaven. I will confess to thee as to one of them, ay, to God Himself; for better is it to tell thee all, than to have thee think me traitor. O God, I could not live, an' thou or any one thoughtest me that." She would not pause, but rushed on, he leaning against the doorway, his eyes coldly, but with a fire unquenchable it seemed to her, evincing no desire to interrupt her.

"I had never seen aught to compare with the vision that God gave me in thee. And thou savedst my life," she was breaking in speech now. Suddenly he started forward as if struck by a bolt from the heavens, his black eyes fairly cutting their way to her soul. She flinched not, "And thou didst save my poor life, and then I saw,

and I was scarcely awake to my heart — your letter," she could get no further.

"To my wife," gasped Goffe. He smote his brow with his clenched hand. "Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, "and you, poor child," suddenly remembering her.

"Yes, to your wife," said Marcia, with instant calm. "And my poor, untaught heart was so like a child's, it uttered a child's foolish cry and fled. But in the forest I found God," her head bowed an instant on her breast at the remembrance of her peril of soul, then it flashed upward erect as the white lily on its stately stem. "Oh, sir, He showed me the way to Him, whom henceforth I serve, and that this my poor child's heart had fancied was naught but a foolish dream a child might have and awake from."

"God's child!" breathed General Goffe. He did not offer to take her hand, but gazed at her with the reverence one would give to a being beyond the stars, serene in the light of heaven.

"And then I went to the cave to reassure you. And then, oh, we have searched for thee early and late. Praise God, now thou art safe. Follow me." Even as she had been speaking, — for she needs must, he would never set his foot in obedience to her command without this, she knew, — she had been planning in her quick and fertile brain how best to conceal him and the senseless figure at their feet.

In a moment she had them in the dining room, General Goffe carrying the limp form of General Whalley; and she locked the door with rapid hand, drawing the curtains before the long French windows.

"The cabinet! thou must hide within it," pointing to a large, wainscoted closet, a conceit of Captain Allerton's, and the pet pride of his daughter. She loved to witness the surprise of her few intimates, at the secret door which closed so completely, showing neither seam nor rivet, that no trace or sign remained along the front of the cabinet, especially as its face was hung with the bravery of kitchen furniture, — brassery, pewter, and china, the like not seen in any house in the Colony.

But Madam Eyers seldom vouchsafed that privilege. "I want to reserve some surprises," she said one day to Marcia, when opening it to get a little china mug, dear as a childhood treasure, set within for safe keeping.

"The cabinet! quick, help me!" cried Marcia, at the doors, the windows, — drawing curtains, — all in one rush.

General Goffe stared helplessly around the spacious apartment. She had already opened the door. "Take him within," she said hoarsely. "O God, I hear a foot approaching!" but it was a false alarm.

The memory of that other night, with the stuffy,

cobwebby loft above the Sperry farm-house shed as shelter, swept over them. The fugitives were safe within, but Marcia closed not the door. A hand held the cordial glass within. "Make him drink it." This done, by pouring it between the half-conscious lips, another was held for General Goffe; and on the shelf before his famished gaze appeared bread and cold meat, hastily snatched from the buffet. The door was shut; he could hear the light footsteps hastily about the apartment, as she went about undoing her work and setting all things as they were. Then all was silent.

"Seems to me, Marcia, you have been gone a very long time," observed Madam Eyers, raising a surprised face. "Thou wert ever light-footed and deft-handed," she added.

Marcia made no reply, as nothing served her so well as silence in this case.

"Now thou shalt have thy cordial," she said with a smile. She had set the decanter on the light stand, a little removed from the bed, but suddenly Madam Eyers exclaimed, "Bring it here, the decanter, I would see if thou hast the right one."

"It is the green and gold one with slender neck thou told'st me once contained the remedy for an ill attack," said Marcia, bringing the decanter slowly to the front. Just then the near-by candle sputtered and went out, and she breathed freely.

All danger from detection of the lowered contents was gone for the time.

"Drat that Eunice!" exclaimed the mistress of the house, who sometimes fell into the more ordinary speech of the day — and it was considered quite elegant, even for ladies, to use a word now and then with a tang — "she has had the impudence to bring me up one of the new candles Betty Slater made but the past week. Well, set the decanter down, Marcia, and bring me my glass of cordial. I dare say it's all right, child; then come and sit by the bedside. I cannot let thee out of my sight."

XXVI

BUT Jed's vindication was brought about in a different way from that he planned.

An Indian runner came into New Haven Town, and as the arrow flies appeared at the house of the Rev. John Davenport.

"Knowest thou aught of one called Jedediah Beetle, where he may be found?"

"Nay," said the minister, sadly, looking up from his study table; "he has disappeared from the town life, and though I have sought him as well as others, early and late, we can obtain no trace of him." He drew a long and troubled sigh. "Who is he who seekest to know?" he asked suddenly.

"One who has sent me to thee," answered the Indian, cautiously.

"Tell him — stay, I will write the words else thou forgettest some that would do honor to Jedediah's memory; for that I seek ever to uphold." The minister drew toward him a sheet of paper, and traced these words: —

"Jedediah Beetle was wrongly accused of stealing a crown piece. He would not tell how it came into his possession. He was put in the public

stocks, was whipped at the whipping-post thirty and nine lashes. His shame, doubtless, for he was a law-abiding citizen, made him leave the town, which he did secretly. I believe most unshakenly in his innocence, and I sorrow for his departure greatly, and will labor on, not despairing that I may some day find him and restore him to New Haven Town.

"JOHN DAVENPORT."

He laid this paper within the hand of the Indian, who glided out suddenly. And the minister turned back to his work.

In five days came one as swiftly, but by no means as noiselessly, into New Haven Town. Clattering down the bridle path, he inquired of the first man he met the way to the minister's house, and did not draw rein until his horse stood before the parsonage door. Then he flung the bridle over the animal's neck, dismounted with headlong haste, and gave a loud, double knock with as little ceremony as if the dwelling house of an ordinary citizen were his destination. A passer-by viewed him in astonishment, turned, and stared again.

On finding that the Rev. John Davenport was within, the horseman scarcely waited to be shown the sacred apartment where those wonderful sermons were created, but bolted in and up to the minister's table.

"I am John Lobden," he said, without the slightest preamble.

The minister, being thus suddenly interrupted in the midst of a most promising paragraph, could only look up and say somewhat tartly, "Well, Mr. John Lobden, to what do I owe the honor of your visit, bringing such abrupt intrusion into my work?"

"No intrusion, I fancy you will say, sir," declared John Lobden, twice as abruptly, "when you know the nature of my visit." He drew from his doublet pocket a bit of paper, much the worse for wear, and smoothing it across one big palm, with the fingers of the other hand he laid it on the study table before the Rev. John Davenport's eyes.

The minister saw his own vindicatory note regarding Jedediah Beetle.

He sprang from his chair and seized the hand of his visitor. "If you have anything to say concerning Jedediah," he exclaimed, "you could not be too warmly welcomed. And I humbly crave thy pardon for my inhospitable greeting."

"I thought thou wouldst be glad to see me," quoth John Lobden, coolly. "No, I cannot sit down till I've told thee what's on my mind," shaking his head at the chair the minister drew up; "I cannot rest till I've seen justice done. Thank Heaven that I sent to thee for information

of his whereabouts when I needed his honest services for a time in another Colony. Pastor Davenport, Jedediah Beetle never stole that crown piece. He is as honest as the day he was born, as far as that is concerned. And as to all else, I'd stake my life."

"I know he never stole it," cried the minister, with warmth, as if he had been contradicted. "Did I not write thee so?" pointing to the communication on the table, for both men were now standing face to face. "And I'd trust him with all I own, and feel secure."

"I gave him that crown piece," declared John Lobden, in a burst.

"You gave him that crown piece!" repeated Pastor Davenport.

"Ay. And he couldn't tell how he came by it. He had promised to speak no word of the transaction of the business, or the meeting with me. And I, fool that I was, never thought of the crown piece getting him into trouble." He slapped his broad forehead with his hand, the Rev. John Davenport helplessly regarding him.

"You see, General Goffe had given me money to pay well for my services."

"General Goffe!" exclaimed the minister, faintly.

"Yes; he'd given me money to pay well for every service done for him. I saw the man's ragged clothes; and his face, though he was cheery as a

grig, was sharp and hungry. I thought to warm the cockles of his heart; for, sir, I can tell you true, I never took such a liking of a sudden to any man as to him; and so I slipped the money into his hand. He would have none of it, at first, and put on great pretence over his poor clothes and poorer appearance of countenance. Lord, sir, I beg your pardon," as he saw the minister's countenance, "you'd have thought he was a merchant prince, an' had you seen him. But I made him take it; and now — oh, I'd give my head if I hadn't!" Honest John Lobden brought his big fist on the study table, till a book, lightly poised, slipped with a thud to the floor.

"But you did it for the best," observed the minister, desiring to comfort, and hurrying around the table edge to recover the book. When he saw it was a volume from the hand of his beloved Milton, he felt he had need of comfort himself.

"And now that I tell thee all, Pastor Davenport," John Lobden drew his hand back and straightened up, "you can see why I have come to make it right for his name, even if I cannot find the man."

Pastor Davenport laid the volume back with a gentle, though hasty, hand.

"This was like Jedediah," he said briefly; "and, by his promise kept, more lives than he knew were saved," he added gravely.

"Thine own among the number," said John Lobden as briefly.

"Yes," said the Rev. John Davenport, "mine own among the number." Then he looked at his visitor keenly.

"Thine eyes ask me what I do next in my effort to make it good for Jedediah Beetle," said John Lobden. "I will set to thee a question. Where would it be wisest publicly to announce his innocence?"

"At the tavern," replied Pastor Davenport; then he related the part General Goffe had played, to the intense satisfaction of his hearer, who with kindling eyes hung upon each word.

"There's a grand soul for thee!" he cried, with hand over his head as if in response to a toast. "If but our Colonies can save him, he will be our leader — God make it so."

The minister's eyes glowed also, but he shook his white head sadly. "If we can save his life, we do well. But now to accomplish what we can for the honor of Jedediah Beetle."

"It is not wise for thee to accompany me to the tavern," said John Lobden, "nor, indeed, for the fact to become known that I have visited thee; for this would bring to light the circumstances under which poor Beetle did the service that by my giving him the crown piece brought him to so hapless a fate."

"Thou art right, I see clearly;" but the minister sighed.

"And now I go to proclaim the honor of Jedediah Beetle," declared John Lobden, holding his sturdy figure like knight-errant at full tilt; "and broadcast, too, mark thee, Pastor Davenport. There be no nook nor cranny in this goodly town but the wind of my words shall blow into before night."

So he departed, jumping to his horse that had not moved a hoof since his sudden stop at the parsonage, and clattering noisily off to the southeast corner of the market-place, where the tavern raised its alluring front. John Lobden, with much bluster, to attract as much attention to his arrival as possible, sprang off, and entered the tap-room.

"A man named Jedediah Beetle has been wrongly accused," he asserted at the top of his voice with forcible gesture, as he swung himself down the room to mine host. "The story hath just come to mine ears, and I am here to make restitution of his fair name."

"And what hast thou to say concerning the matter?" queried Boniface, resting his broad hands on the railing of the bar. "And what is it to thee?" he added, with an unpleasant grin.

"Softly, softly there!" advised John Lobden at him, "else I shall have to punch thy head. And as I have only come to do simple justice, I care not

to linger for matters with insignificant persons." He set his thumbs well within the armholes of his doublet, turning his back on the landlord, and walked with a mighty air to a knot of citizens regarding him with wide eyes and rapt attention from a corner.

"Friends, since mine host chooseth to be surly," he addressed them, "I have done with him. Perchance thou canst tell me where I may have the good fortune to find this Jedediah Beetle of whom I spoke."

"Alas!" exclaimed one man, "we know naught of Jed, as we have always called him. And sorry am I to say it, for I miss his cheery face."

"And I," "And I," so it went round the group till all had spoken up. "He had a kind heart, and many will miss the good deeds that are not half come to light since he's gone."

"Gone?" echoed the stranger. "What dost thou mean? Explain thyself, for I have come to make restitution to him of his fair name."

"Thou hast come too late, I fear," said the other; "for since he was whipped at yon whipping-post," he pointed toward its gloomy outline on the market-place, and his brow grew dark, "he took ill at the shame, most likely, and we have never seen him since."

"Whipped?" the stranger seemed to have no words at his command save echoes.

"Yes, yes, for the crown piece," cried the other, sharply; "a pair of travelling adventurers swore he stole it from them. We know he never did. Jed might be lazy, but I swear to thee" — here the speaker waxed vehement — "he was as true and honest a man as there is in this Colony, and I wish there were more like him."

"Why didst thou not believe his word, an' he were so honest?" The stranger brought his sharp gray eyes to bear on the spokesman of the group. Meanwhile, the number of listeners was greatly augmented, man after man, attracted by the signs of interest within the open doorway, hurrying into the tap-room from the thoroughfare.

"Jed would tell naught of the way in which he came by the crown piece," answered another man, hastily, "and there was the mystery, so, for the honor of the Colony and the fair name of our town, he was whipped. But a sorry day it was for us," he added.

"A sorry day it was, my friend," cried the stranger, his lip curling scornfully. Then he whirled about, faced the company, and declared in a voice loud enough to reach the market-place, "I gave that crown piece to Jedediah Beetle!"

There was a sudden pause. If a tankard were lifted, or a glass half way to lips, it was set down before the liquor had left either, and men stared at the big figure and resolute face. Then a derisive laugh broke from mine host.

"A pretty cock-and-bull story," he sneered, "at this late day, and nothing to prove it." He put his hands to his fat sides, and shook with amusement.

"What did you give the crown piece to Jed for?" he asked at length, coming out of his fit of laughter; the stranger, without stirring, regarding him composedly, as of too small consequence to arouse anger.

"When thou dost go about the country giving thy private business to every cur that barks at thy heels, I'll tell thee mine," he remarked coolly. "Hast thou that same crown piece now, mine host?" he demanded suddenly.

"Nay, and if I had it I would not give it thee before thou hadst described its face," retorted the landlord, triumphantly.

"Canst remember what thou didst with it, and where passed it off?" pursued the stranger.

"Describe it," shouted the landlord, with a sweeping grin for all to see what a predicament he had led the stranger into.

"Wilt thou promise to tell me what I just asked of thee, and to help me to recover it, so that I may hold it in my hand to show these gentlemen here that I have told the truth?" John Lobden put these questions rapidly, but he kept a cool head.

"Yes, I promise," declared mine host, with a laughing face; "but, odds bodkins, thou never'll get its face before thee."

"There is an arrow traced with a sharp point on that self-same face," said John Lobden, in a clear, high voice, addressing more the circle of listeners, now very large, than the landlord; "and it pointeth to the letter L. The arrow and the letter are both entwined with a serpent. I did them in an idle moment."

"Odds bodkins and bludgeons," roared mine host, "thou hast won!" He staggered, pale and trembling, against the railing of the bar, and surveyed them all. "Gentlemen, he describeth the crown piece. I must make good my promise. This way." He pulled himself together and led the company, each hurrying to be first, into the room back of the bar, where he proceeded to the broad fireplace, first opening the little cupboard to take out a small prying iron. With this in his hand he knelt on the hearth and inserting the instrument within a chink in the brick work he soon laid bare a small wooden box.

"Gentlemen," he said, sitting back on his feet, and surveying them all, "and you, sir — those of ye who be married men know 'tis not easy to keep a piece of gold, where the wife of thy bosom has knowledge of it." He laughed, his good humor quite restored, opened the box, and plucked out the identical crown piece, a by no means difficult operation, since it was the only one in a company of smaller coins.

"Thou hast described it neatly," he said, holding it forth to view. "I only wish I could as easily clap eyes again on honest Jed Beetle's face."

"Wilt allow me to replace it, worthy host?" asked Lobden, drawing out a handful of coins, among which rattled two or three pieces to match the one between the landlord's thumb and finger.

"Certes," cried this individual, his mouth watering at the sight. "My good woman will never detect the difference. But did she so, and discover that her box had been invaded never so innocently — well," he paused, and gazed ruefully at his company, "an' ye be married men, ye know all about it." He slipped the gold piece Lobden had dropped in his hand, in exchange for the other, into the box, slammed on the cover, muttering that it was well that the goodwife was from home this day, and replaced it within the hearth, which he made all tight and secure once more. Then he stood straight, like a man who is glad a deed is done.

"Now let us return to the tap-room," cried John Lobden, putting carefully away the precious crown piece into a leathern wallet he now drew out from an inner pocket, "and thou, worthy host, fill up the glasses high. I would that the entire company should drink to Jedediah Beetle and his honest name restored. And before we do that, for each offence should be smoothed over on the spot, I do crave thy pardon, landlord, for my hasty speech.

But thy tone and laugh grieved me; and there's my hand."

He brought it down with such a smack into the palm outstretched to receive it, that mine host grimaced with pain.

"And I ask thy pardon," roared the landlord, "for it seemed such an idle tale to bring us, as if our wits were addled. So, all is right between us now, is 't not?"

"All is now right between us," said John Lobden, striking off merrily, his guests and the landlord, in glad accord, at his heels, to the tap-room, where the cup should go around in honor of Jedediah Beetle. Thence the story would wing its way before nightfall, Lobden very well knew, into every household in fair New Haven Town.

And a tall figure, motionless as a graven image, in the shadow of the tavern window, moved off with sudden bound, as the cup was thus going around bravely. Poganuc, the Indian, was bearing the news, on joyous feet, to the camp in the wilderness.

But Jedediah Beetle shook his head at all suggestion of his triumphant entry into New Haven Town.

"They all know it," he said, a proud light in his pale blue eyes, "an' that's enough. As for me, I'm promised to you Injuns, an' with you I'll live an' die."

XXVII

MARCIA lay keenly alive to every sound, listening till such time as the household might be quiet for the night and enfolded in sleep.

Madam Eyers, across the hall, was breathing softly, alike oblivious to her desire for fresh news, and forgetful of her recently set up claim to invalidism. She had gotten Marcia Sabine, and she was quite content; and a smile quivered on the rosy mouth, not so very far removed after all from young womanhood, and withal very handsome. The rounded arm thrown up above the pillow was plump and shapely, even girlish in its outline. She was dreaming, and she said suddenly, in soft voice, "Marcia."

Marcia slipped off from her big carved four poster, on which she had thrown herself without removing her clothes, and stepped quickly across the hall, her candle in her hand, to stand by the gay silken-draped bed. Her anxious gaze, as she bent over and scanned the pretty face upon the pillow, disclosed her friend still wandering in dreamland. She did not need the words that now

fell upon her strained ear, "Marcia, I think just as you do about the Judges."

The two had been talking this over, the last thing before retiring; for Marcia, with all her wit employed to that end, had not been able to thrust the subject into the background, and the little mistress of the "Allerton Mansion" had stoutly declared that no matter what hint of criticism should be brought to her ears (as it was, the slightest whisper of truth, and softened at that, as to details, was all that any one had had the hardihood to present to her attention) she should range herself on Marcia's side, and should hold firmly to the same opinion. "So make yourself easy, my dear," she said, drawing the face so near her own down for a kiss, "you were just right. These dreadful men are enemies of the King, beside murdering his father — quite enough for their punishment. And to let them go, would, mayhap, breed sedition in our Colonies." Then she had fondled Marcia to her heart's content, protesting that all who dared to criticise would, before many days, change their expressions to praise; and at last, when no more excuses presented themselves for delaying the hour of bedtime, she allowed the candles to be put out, and Marcia was free to go to her own room.

Free, but with spirit chained in agony for the hunted fugitives in the big old cabinet, who should

have been on their way long before, as soon as the darkness of the night settled down, to their only refuge that held the slightest hope of safety — the cave! Would God ever give her the blissful moment when she might release them and speed them, reenforced by cordial and meat, on that journey!

She clasped her hands in the silent thankfulness of voiceless prayer, for the moment had now arrived, and she turned on light foot, away from the elegant bed-chamber of the mistress of the mansion, to descend noiselessly the long staircase. The air was oppressive and confined in shadowy gloom, and the silence complete. The whole mansion seemed heavy with sleep, each step reassuring the girl; and as she neared the spacious dining room, her spirits rose, and Hope whispered, "Saved, if thou get them off speedily."

She set her candle down upon the polished surface of the heavy mahogany table, and with bated breath drew near to the big cupboard, the brave array of brassery and pewter giving out glints of light to meet the solitary candle beams. All was silent within.

"All is well." How hollow and sepulchral her voice struck the heavy air as she put her mouth to the front of the cabinet overhung with its rich ornaments.

"God reward thee!" It was General Goffe's muffled voice that responded.

"And now do thou make speedy thy departure, for thou must reach the cave ere daylight strikes the town. It is thine only hope; I will undo the door." She was busy with deft fingers at the secret fastening, when these words caused her hand to slip and her brain to whirl. "It is useless to try. General Whalley is exhausted nigh to death; he cannot move."

"Now may God help me to save them!" Marcia in her agony seized the corner of the buffet, clinging to it with brain swaying and darkness before her eyes, clinging, clinging, with the certain knowledge that, did she lose her poise, all was lost indeed. Like a drowning creature she had no strength to moan, "All thy waves and billows have gone over me!" She was living it in her soul, "Yet will I trust Thee."

"Then must thou stay there through another day." The billows had rolled over her; but she was peaceful in the hollow of His hand, who stilleth the waves and biddeth the sea to be calm. She was astonished at her own voice, so assured and tranquil as she spoke, with her mouth close to the cabinet door. "Is it comfortable within, and hast thou air sufficient?"

"It is comfortable; a haven of rest," replied General Goffe. "And the air comes well through the little apertures."

"When the morning dawns thou wilt see a fan-

shaped window above thy head. Pull the cord that hangs from it, and thou wilt have additional air," said Marcia, collecting and marshalling her thoughts if perchance still further comfort could be devised. "And now I beg thee to minister to him; and give him more wine to revive him."

"Nay," the older wisdom replied. "He hath taken all that can do him good in his enfeebled state. What he needs is sleep, and forgetfulness of flight or pursuit. Then by to-morrow at nightfall, please God, he will be restored; and we can return to Providence Hill and our cave."

"I will go away for a moment only," said the voice without. "Do not be alarmed; I shall return."

She came on noiseless step, bringing pillows and a comforter, then softly opening the door, she thrust them within. "May God bless thee both. I cannot speak to thee through the long day to-morrow. I shall find no opportunity," she said, setting within on the shelf a ewer of water and more wine and meat and bread. "But thou must know that the silence means 'all is well.' And at nightfall, when the house is quiet, I will come and let thee out."

He had no words in which to thank her. He simply pointed to heaven. She gently closed the door and arranged all as it was before, and picking up her candle crept up to throw herself again on

her bed. And God pitifully closed her eyes in slumber, in which she lay more like to one dead.

The little mistress of the mansion came down to breakfast, bonny and sweet in her flowered morning gown, and fresh and dewy-eyed as a child.

"Marcia," she said, toying first with the lace at her wrist, then with the silver porringer and spoon before her, when no further excuse suggested itself for lingering over the pleasant meal, "I will tell thee what I am going to do this morning." She pushed the silver things aside, and looked up with a bright smile. "I am going to set up my cabinet. Ah, how delightsome the task will be, with thee at my side. And thou hast never seen all my beautiful things that Simon brought me from the Mediterranean." She dropped a tear at the memory, which she brushed off with her plump little hand.

"No!" exclaimed Marcia, in a tone of horror.

Madam Eyers started at the sound, her eyes widening in astonishment.

"What aileth thee, Marcia?" she cried fearfully.

Marcia, whose sleep had held no reviving quality, only forgetfulness for a time, was taken unawares. The last shred of hope would be torn from the fugitives if the mistress of the mansion should discover their retreat. She could find no words

after that awful "No," but sat and gazed speechlessly at her hostess.

"Are you ill — oh, Marcia!" Madam Eyers sprang from her carved, high-backed chair to skip around the table where the girl sat in stony silence. "I must get you some wine — oh, oh!" wringing her small hands, "what shall I do, dear Marcia; please don't be ill," she kept pleading while busy at the buffet.

"Dear me, where is my silver-topped decanter?" she exclaimed, her tone changing like lightning; "now drat that careless Eunice!" She fumbled here and there on the polished buffet top, and even ran her head into its little cupboards beneath, and explored the drawers as well; while Marcia, to whom no depths of misery now mattered, since there seemed but one inevitable ending, the sure discovery of the Judges, sat dully conscious of her rummaging, accompanied by little gusty complaints at each stage of the search. Indeed, the little mistress of the mansion had utterly forgotten what she went for, until, as she felt there was no other place in which to look for the chased, silver-topped, cut-glass decanter, that was the pride of her heart, she turned, despairingly, and saw Marcia's white face.

"Child, child, do forgive me," she cried in a remorseful wave. "Eunice shall bring more wine; and I will scold her well afterward," she added

to herself. She rang the bell sharply, gave the order, and when it came, with marvellous self-control shut her lips tightly together, poured the glass for Marcia and stayed by her chair till she drank off a goodly portion of it.

Suddenly a new idea struck the girl. "If I only can get her to help me upstairs and care for me — for I really feel ill, it will divert her from arranging the cabinet."

"Dear Madam Eyers," she said pleadingly, her beautiful dark eyes turned to the round, pretty face, so full of concern, "could you — might I ask so great a favor — that you would help me upstairs; perhaps if I lay down I should feel better."

"Oh, Marcia, are you really so ill?" cried Madam Eyers, aghast at this unexpected request from one who had never, to her certain knowledge, experienced a sick day. "And to think," she could not restrain herself more, "that I had quite set my heart on having you help me fix my cabinet to-day." Reproach stood in her eyes, and tinged her voice.

"But I can help you to-morrow," said Marcia; "I shall be quite well then. This sickness will not last."

"Ah, no, I shall be obliged to arrange the things alone, then," said the little mistress. Of all days in the year to be perverse! "And you can lie down on the sofa in the drawing-room, can you

not, and look through the door and watch me? That will almost be like our working together."

She ran off to get a long, white apron to tie over her elaborate flowered morning gown; and Marcia sat cold and hopeless, her poor knees knocking together in fright.

"Wait till Eunice clears the breakfast things, do, dear Madam Eyers, then I will feel better and can help you. For I don't want you to do it alone," she said desperately, on Madam Eyers's return.

"Are you sure you will feel quite able?" she cried joyfully.

"Yes; I shall feel quite able," answered Marcia, only hoping now to get Eunice out of the apartment, and then to make a clear breast of the whole thing.

Madam Eyers, therefore, sent the serving-woman to right and to left in the briskest fashion, removing all traces of the morning meal.

"Now we have the room to ourselves, Marcia," she exclaimed, "and a clear field—" and she took a step or two toward the cabinet.

Marcia was just about to say, "Madam Eyers, I beg thee to wait a moment, I have somewhat to tell thee," when she chanced to look out through one of the long windows that commanded a good view of the bay and the path down to it; and along this path were now proceeding hastily, as though on urgent errand, three men. Just as she

caught sight of them, they paused; and, one pointing to the "Allerton Mansion," they all bent their steps across the grass to its front door.

Marcia sat as if turned to stone, a horror freezing her vitals. Just at this instant Madam Eyers was repeating with smiling face and happy eyes, "Yes, a good clear field," and she threw wide the cabinet door.

She did not scream, but stood frozen to the spot. General Goffe's tall figure, cool and collected as was his countenance, was exposed to full view. At his feet, pillowed in slumber, lay the exhausted form of General Whalley.

Marcia sprang like lightning to her side. "Madam Eyers,"—every word cut into the frozen ear,—"these are the Judges. I have been playing a part when people thought me betraying them. I shall die if any harm comes to them. The pursuers are here—I just saw them through the window. What will you do?"

The mistress of the mansion was little, but her wit was large and at the same time nimble. "I think just as you do, Marcia," she said, closed the door, and ran to her work-table, twitched out her embroidery work, and drew a lazy stitch, then yawned. Marcia, lost in admiration of her, despite her distress, took a cloth and set to dusting the claw feet of the big table, to hide her white face till she could pinch some color into it.

Eunice opened the door, "If you please, madam," with a timorous glance over at the work-table, "there's a couple, no, three, gentlemen here as wishes to see ye."

"Show the gentlemen in, Eunice," said madam, blandly. Again a lazy stitch or two, and a gentle little yawn.

"Marcia, dear, you needn't dust any more; let Eunice do the rest," she said over her shoulder, as the three gentlemen, very ill at ease, were ushered into the apartment.

She gave them her sweetest smile, and bade them be seated. But all declining, and shuffling about somewhat uneasily on their feet, they each waited for the other to speak and to declare their errand. At last one broke out.

"Ye see, Madam Eyers, we've got permission, or commission rather, from the deputies. Ye know there have been several ap'inted since the General Court to search the houses."

The widow wrinkled her pretty brow and looked up over her embroidery for explanation.

"To search for the Judges," explained the man.

"Regicides, you mean," corrected Madam Eyers, with a scornful note in her voice.

"Well, yes, Regicides; you are right, madam, though most everybody in our town calls 'em Judges."

"I call them Regicides," declared Madam Eyers, flatly. "Well, what then?"

"Why, we've come to search this house. To tell you the truth, we met a man at sun-up who said he saw the two Judges — Regicides, I mean — as plain as day, last evening, stealing across the path by the bay below this house, and that they turned up to your very door."

"*To my very door!*" screamed the little widow, dropping embroidery and all, nearly turning over the work-table as she sprang to her feet; "what an insult, to stand there and tell me that those wicked, horrible creatures even ventured to so much as look at my house! Marcia, think what an insult! You know Marcia Sabine," then she gave a little laugh. "It amuses me so," as she came out of her indignation, "to think of their putting their heads into a place where *she* is!" and she laughed again, a silvery little gurgle of amusement.

"That's so," emphatically exclaimed one of the men.

"Well, but I s'pose they thought 'twas your house, and didn't know she was here," said another, who had not spoken before.

"Oh, I think just as Marcia does," airily declared the widow. Marcia all this time stood as tall as possible, her head set high, and a scornful smile curling her lip, as if the whole subject were quite beneath her notice.

"You have no objection then, I take it, to our searching your house?" observed one of the three after a pause.

"Objection? Not a mite in the world. Search all you are inclined to do, gentlemen; and if Marcia and I can help you in any way, let us know. You'll find us ready assistants." She gave them another smile, the little widow did, and the ransacking began.

"We'll look through here first," said one who seemed to be spokesman, "and then we won't have to trouble you again." He was very affable, for the little widow was very engaging. He never supposed that he would be talking so pleasantly and familiarly with the elegant mistress of this grand mansion. She bowed and smiled, and showed all the curves and dimples of her pretty face; and the three men passed around the spacious apartment, peering into this corner, now into that, opening the door of cupboard, and invading the privacy of all nooks that challenged attention. The mistress of the mansion had returned to her seat, and picking up her embroidery again set two or three more lazy stitches. Marcia returned vigorously to her dusting, and no one looking in could have supposed an awful tragedy just within a hair's-breadth, and kept off by a thin strip of polished wood, covered with elegant brassery.

When the searchers had passed without, with bows and thanks for the courtesy, the eyes of the two women rolled toward each other, but not a muscle betrayed them. The lazy stitches were set, and the cloth flapped in a housewifely way against the polished furniture. At last Madam Eyers spoke, "Marcia, I believe I shall have my old blue paduasoy ripped up; it will make over as good as new, I take it."

"I would," said Marcia, encouragingly, "I always liked you in that gown, dear Madam Eyers."

"Yes, I have quite made up my mind," declared the little woman; and getting out of her chair again she went to the door and called: "Eunice, go and get my blue paduasoy, and bring me some scissors. Marcia and I are going to rip it up, to be made over."

The paduasoy being brought, and two pairs of scissors, Madam Eyers spread it across her knees, and pointed out thin places with critical finger. "Come here, Marcia," she said, "it is really quite gone in spots. Still, I think there is enough to make over, if we only use our wits well. Now sit you down there and help me, that's a good child, and we will make quick work of it." And Madam Eyers, who had not ripped a gown for years on years, if ever, snipped away bravely, Marcia opposite armed with a companion pair of scissors, their heads close together.

"You see we should have both tumbled over and died, if this had gone on much longer without speaking," whispered the little widow under cover of the snipping. "This paduasoy is nearly brand new, as you know, but I couldn't think of anything else, and something had to be done, only don't cut the stitches much, unless those men pass through the room again, and we can sew it up afterward."

But the men passed not out through the spacious apartment, but out the front doorway, and down the grassy slope to the path that looked over the bay. And the two women fell into each other's arms.

Marcia broke away in a breathing space and dashed over to the cabinet. "All is well," she said distinctly, her mouth close to the polished surface.

"Praise the Lord," answered a muffled voice, and a second later, "I beg thee to thank thy kind friend, the mistress of this house, for what she has done: and may the Lord forever bless her."

When Marcia reported this message to Madam Eyers, that little lady, with tears streaming over her cheeks, trotted to the cabinet. "Oh, sir!" she exclaimed in a sepulchral whisper, laying her round dimpled face well between some pendent pewter mugs, "I did it to please Marcia; she'd have died if I didn't. And then I did it to please

myself, for *I* should have died had aught harmed either of you in my house."

After this speech she considered the proper thing accomplished, and trotted off. But it is safe to say that the blue paduasoy had no more stitches snipped out.

And that night, as soon as ever the kindly shadows fell, the two fugitives were helped from the cabinet, General Walley so far recovered that he conveyed his thanks to the two rescuers, as a gallant warrior should, who appreciates a good battle. But he laid his aged hand on Marcia's brown hair, and it lingered there. "Now, may this child receive Thine especial blessing, O Lord God," he prayed. "May it never depart from her, but be over her every step of the way till life shall end."

They were gone, their faces set toward Providence Hill, and the only place they could call home. Happy would they be safely to reach their cave.

XXVIII

WHEN Madam Eyers was told the episode at the whipping-post, in which Marcia suffered, the white heat of her indignation knew no bounds.

The girl had run home after breakfast as fast as possible, following the footsteps of the fugitives in the direction of the "Sperry Farm," though they crept stealthily under cover of the fringe of wood skirting the town, while she sped along the public highway.

She was, therefore, soon at home, borne on her young, tireless feet, stopping a moment only at the house of the rich merchant, Mr. William Jones, to acquaint him with the glad news of the safety of the Judges.

Lucy Leet peeped out from an upper window and saw her disappear down the road. "She will never speak to me again," she cried, sobbing as if her heart must break. "But I shall run now and tell Madam Eyers all, since Marcia has left."

No sooner said than done by Lucy Leet, who, once making up her mind, had the most sublime faith in action. She was, therefore, as soon as pos-

sible in the presence of the mistress of the "Allerton Mansion," who, by the way, was in a glorious frame of mind and satisfied with herself, Marcia, and all the rest of the world. She was ready to believe herself from the first devoted to the interests of the Judges, and from henceforth on she walked as though civil and religious liberty could be sustained only by her personal efforts.

"Well — well, Miss Lucy Leet," she exclaimed, pacing up and down her long and splendid hall, unable in her exalted mood to settle to any quiet work. "And so you thought to bother Marcia by turning up your little nose, did you, on what she considered her duty? Not that she told me — dear no, Marcia's not that sort, and that you know as well as I; but I heard it outside."

"No, I do not believe, for a moment, that Marcia cares what I think of her," replied Lucy, sorrowfully, and standing quite still in the hall's centre. "I have only struck at my own heart."

Madam Eyers turned abruptly, and stared in her abruptest fashion. "Well, if I ever! And where is Lucy Leet?"

"Oh, Madam Eyers," exclaimed Lucy, wholly regardless of gaze or tone, "neither has Marcia told you aught, I am quite sure, of what I have come to relate."

Madam Eyers, as we have seen, dearly loved

the freshest news. Now her blue eyes brightened. "Come hither, dear," she said, "and open your budget. No; Marcia is no hand at gossip's tale, as thou art. So now for a feast." She drew Lucy to a big sofa in the angle of the hall behind a pillar, and snuggled herself into the corner. "I am ready," she announced in contentment. "Sit you down, and begin to reel off."

"Alas, Madam Eyers," Lucy sighed deeply, "this is no pleasant tale; but I will have it over as soon as I can," and she put the whole affair before the little woman.

The big mansion seemed unable to contain the wrath of its little mistress when the ending was reached. Lucy was astonished that so small a person could make such a to-do, and could command such absorbing attention as was now demanded from herself and from every servant in the household. Her smelling-bottle must be run for; she must lie down on the sofa, at full length, and her hair be brushed, her little high-heeled slippers drawn off, and her temples bathed with lavender water; she must have cordial, then wine; she must be disrobed, the gay-flowered morning gown discarded for the sober bed-gown, then she disappeared behind the drawn curtains of her bed. She would have none of the splendid silken coverlet over her; but with hysterical bursts commanded the dullest, darkest bedspread, more in accordance

with the gloomy state of her mind, to be brought to enfold her.

And in ten minutes after all this was done, and the tempest somewhat abated, she suddenly pushed aside the bed curtains with a frantic hand and announced her intention of going at once to see Parson Davenport about the matter.

"And you shall go with me, Lucy Leet," she declared to the terrified girl.

Nothing would stop her, and Lucy, glad after all to throw the burden of responsibility upon the pastor's shoulders, for she was now at her wits' end to know what to do with her, hurried along by her side, as with excited gait the little widow sped to the parsonage. On the way they came, as ill luck would have it, upon Matthew Bunce, the blacksmith, who with dark rings under his eyes, as if he had not slept for nights, and a lowering brow, stood aside on the narrow path to allow them to pass.

"Do you not know, sir," cried Madam Eyers, in towering indignation, "you have thrust a great calamity upon this quiet town; you, sir, by having a daughter capable of the wicked act at yon whipping-post" — she pointed her embroidered, black silk glove at the market-place. It was as if a lamb, and the tiniest one of the flock, should suddenly charge upon a bull across a sleeping meadow.

Matthew Bunce stared at her dully and pulled

his forelock mechanically. Lucy Leet pulled the arm in silken pelisse, and tried to drag the little woman on; but flushed with the victory, she returned to the charge. "And, sir, I trust that New Haven Town, yea, the whole Colony, will arise in its might and drive ye both beyond its borders. We want none such with us!" With this shot she swept past him, standing so high on her little high-heeled slippers, whose ribbons Lucy had retied the last minute before sallying out, that it seemed a miracle how she could retain her balance.

"Madam!" roared the blacksmith, — now look out, poor lamb! — "an' ye were not a woman I'd make mince meat of ye. If it will satisfy ye to know this, hear it now. When my daughter told a lie, she is no daughter of mine. I go now to beg the magistrates not only to haul her to justice, but to bore a hole through her tongue. She never darkens my door again."

The little widow dropped down on her high-heeled slippers as near the ground as she could, and clutching Lucy's arm slipped over the path at a pace that held more speed than grace.

"He said he'd make mince meat of me," she gasped, when at a safer remove; "didst thou hear him? and bore a hole in Sylvy's tongue! Noticed you that? Oh, oh!" as on they sped, and they stopped not till they drew breath in the minister's study.

"It is true," said Pastor Davenport, when Madam Eyers had unburdened herself and been made the recipient as well of certain features of the case, "that Matthew Bunce is in a terrible state of mind. He is upright, and a great stickler for truth to the spirit as well as to the letter of the law; and when discovered, as he did, through her confession, that his daughter had told a lie, he drove her from his door. She is here now."

"Here!" exclaimed Madam Eyers, bouncing from her chair to gather up her flowing skirts.

"Sit you down, madam," commanded Pastor Davenport with authority. "This is a Christian community, and we should ill deport ourselves who are Christians did we forget to carry out the teachings of our Master."

Madam Eyers slid back into the chair depths.

"Marcia has forgiven Sylvy," said the minister, slowly, "and we must follow her example."

"Oh, now I know, Pastor Davenport," exclaimed the little matron, with a displeased expression, "that you are going to work upon Marcia's feelings. She never thinks of herself, that we all know. She would forgive anything, provided it did not injure others, and of course she will forgive that wretch of a girl." She wrung her hands in distress, not noticing how her pet embroidered gloves were suffering.

The minister let the affront to himself pass,

when he observed her distaught mind. "You do not understand me, Madam Eyers," he remarked quietly; "it is hardly to be wondered at in the light of your love for Marcia. Sylvy is to suffer public rebuke; this, it is absolutely necessary, should follow her public confession. But a public whipping, such as Marcia suffered, this Marcia has plead so earnestly shall not be inflicted, that the magistrates have at last consented she shall have her way."

"And why should not Sylvy Bunce suffer for her wickedness what she made Marcia Sabine, the innocent one, to endure?" cried Madam Eyers in a high, clear voice, her eyes sparkling with anger.

"Simply because, as I said, Marcia Sabine has interceded for her; and the town authorities, to atone for their hasty judgment, have given her her will in the matter."

"A great way to atone for the most monstrous piece of injustice that ever was inflicted!" cried Madam Eyers, her anger knowing no bounds.

"Wouldst thou take away from Marcia Sabine her high soul and all that makes her the beautiful spirit of womanly compassion and mercy, to drag it in the dust of ordinary life?" cried the minister. His dark lambent eyes glowed with righteous passion; his scholar's face, so cultured and serene, flashed a scornful gleam in its every line. "Ah, madam, you had better let Marcia Sabine alone

with her God; she stands on a higher plane than thou or I in this matter." It was all he would say; and for the first time in her life the little mistress of the "Allerton Mansion" turned away from the parsonage, feeling that she had outstayed her welcome.

"Help me home, Lucy," she begged humbly. "Marcia Sabine is lost to me, I fear, forever; for on her height she will never stoop more to friendship with me, who would counsel her to revenge."

"Say not so, Madam Eyers," cried Lucy, through her tears. "But Marcia must go her own way, as her mind is made up for herself, that thou knowest right well."

"I know it right well," repeated Madam Eyers, and she sighed deeply.

But when the day arrived for the public confession, she arrayed herself in her stiffest silk gown that would stand alone, and all the bravery of the rest of her apparel brought from over the seas. For she was determined, since Marcia would let slip such a grand opportunity, upheld by the magistrates, to work high and mighty judgment on the one who had injured her so cruelly, that she would give her outward support with every magnificent adjunct that could appeal to the public eye. So she adjusted every ornament, and arranged each detail with the welfare of the girl constantly in view, and presented herself early at the meeting-

house where the confession was to be made, and the reproach to be passed upon the offender.

Farmer Richard Sperry rode in early from the farm, and alone; his wife, contrary to his fears, still ignorant of the whole affair, as she had been kept by an enfeebled state a prisoner to the farm-house, and thus from attendance at Sabbath worship, since it happened.

Will Hepburn was there already on the market-place. Madam Eyers hurried up to him, her ribbons floating and fluttering for the simple people, now fast convening, to gape at. "How glad I am my apparel is as it should be," she reflected, feeling every glance. "Where is Marcia?" she demanded of Will; "she rode not in with her uncle."

"She is at Pastor Davenport's," said Will. His blue eyes glowed at her, and with no glance at a feature of her splendid attire, then they seemed to look past her. "She is coming over with him and Sylvy Bunce."

"Now, by my soul, Will, I am angered indeed!" exclaimed the mistress of the "Allerton Mansion," with passionate eyes. "How can Marcia Sabine walk by the side of a girl sunk so low as Sylvy Bunce! It condones her offence; and Marcia best have a care, or she will suffer in the minds of all these people," she waved her hand at the crowd, "for contact with such as she."

"Marcia Sabine is better fitted to judge than are her friends, no matter how well they love her," said Will Hepburn, stiffly.

"Say'st thou so?" retorted Madam Eyers, angrily, "thou art but poor upholder of her cause then. The offender should be left to the judge of the Court. Surely the magistrates know better than a wilful girl, who sees not her own interests, how to deal with the case."

"There is no time to discuss it," observed Will. "See, they come," pointing off to the "private way" leading from the house of the Rev. John Davenport to the meeting-house. The minister walked before, and after him the two girls, Marcia as near the girl to be publicly degraded as if on the most friendly terms, for the latter's footsteps faltered, and, her head on her breast, she seemed not to know what way she took. Madam Davenport glided gently after.

When Madam Eyers's eye took in the little procession with its two central figures, she would have disgraced herself, on whom all eyes were levelled, by reason of her splendid appearance, had not Will taken her arm and forced her to move to a less conspicuous spot.

"Dost think we, who love Marcia Sabine as the apple of the eye, would not guard her from harm?" he said sharply, in a low voice.

"But I love her," cried Madam Eyers, piteously,

"and I would save her from what will be a shame and a grief to her afterward."

"Fear not," he said solemnly, "such as she are never disgraced. And let me tell thee, Madam Eyers, neither thou nor I can hope to reach the height to which her soul has climbed. Let her alone with God." The same words these the minister had employed; and Madam Eyers, feeling solid ground slipping away beneath her, passed in at the meeting-house doorway, and sank helplessly into a seat.

The edifice was thronged, the nature of the case being such as to draw hither every man, woman, or child who could attend, so that the crowd outside was much greater than within. A stern array of public officers sat upon the platform, all the deputies of the town being in their places, and some additional citizens of weighty influence. Sylvy Bunce sat with her head on the breast of Marcia, who in gray stuff gown and white kerchief half supported her, whispering words of encouragement now and then in her ear, for the girl was almost dead from fright and exhaustion. Apart, on the further side of the room, leaned against the wall the stalwart form of the blacksmith, his huge arms folded across his massive chest, and his coal-black eyes fixed with an unalterable stare on his daughter's face.

Pastor Davenport sat on Marcia's other side,

and Lucy Leet crept up next to Madam Eyers. Farmer Sperry was just behind, and with him Will Hepburn, who never took his serene eyes from Marcia's face. Friends, citizens, or strangers passing through the town, grouped themselves about, not one of the entire assembly in the attitude of an idle spectator, and a deep solemnity pervaded the meeting-house, now a court of justice.

Just before the proceedings began, a tall and stalwart young Indian came silently on the market-place, and drawing near the meeting-house took his position close by an open window, commanding a good view of the interior and the principal actors in the ceremony. It was Poganuc, the Indian servant of Farmer Sperry.

"Silence in the presence of the Court!" shouted the town crier, and the formal proceedings had begun.

"Let her who ten days since in this sacred house lodged complaint, and swore falsely to another's hurt, now step forth. Sylvy Bunce, this Court commands thee to render thy confession."

Twice the girl, upon whom all eyes were burning, essayed to stand; but her feet refused to support her. "Courage," said Marcia's voice in her ear, "it will soon be over," but she sank back limply. "Come, I will go with thee," and before any one could realize it, she had put her arm around the

waist of the blacksmith's daughter, and led her half fainting to the place assigned near the platform. When Madam Eyers saw that, she nearly died from vexation.

"Let her alone," whispered one of the deputies to the chief deputy presiding, who made a movement as if to object.

"My father's eyes — they will kill me!" moaned Sylvy, too low for any save Marcia's ear.

"Do not fear them," — Marcia turned the poor face, shrinking to the supporting arm so that it could only feel what its eyes avoided, — "but nerve thyself up to do thy duty. Listen, the judge is speaking to thee."

"I do summon thee now to tell us, the officers of this town," — he waved his hand toward the other deputies on the platform, — "and to this assembly the whole truth of the matter concerning which on thy complaint and thy false statement Marcia Sabine suffered wrongly at the whipping-post ten days since, that justice may be done her, and thy foul crime atoned for." His tone was sternness itself, and ate its way into every soul there. As for the criminal, she swayed helplessly and seemed about to fall.

"Sylvy, I command thee to speak, and tell it quickly," said Marcia, scarce above a whisper; and the girl looking into the firm face above her, the dark luminous eyes pitifully holding her soul, was

dominated by the will so high and resolute. She opened her parched lips and, scarce knowing what she said, began her confession. "I was angry at Marcia Sabine; I determined to hurt her if I could, if no one found me out, and I met her on the market-place, and I — oh, I told not the truth; Marcia was ever kind to me, though she liked me not. I taunted her — and — "

"End it quickly," counselled Marcia in a whisper; "tell it as thou told it to Pastor Davenport."

"Marcia Sabine need not think to spare the offender too much," said the chief deputy, reprovingly. "It was a serious crime, and it needeth all the open confession that the sinner findeth in her heart to give."

"She is like to die," said Marcia, raising her face, shining with pity, to the chief deputy. "Oh, make her not tarry over the trifles, I beg thee, sir. And I consider not myself faultless in past years in manner or speech to her. I should have been kinder. She is not wholly to blame."

"Stop her!" cried Madam Eyers, in a faint little scream, heard only by her nearest neighbors. She looked into Will Hepburn's eyes, but they were fastened on Marcia's face.

"Sylvy Bunce, proceed!" commanded the deputy.

She gathered herself together, fortified by Marcia's eyes. "It was false." Her voice was shrill

now. It was her supreme effort, and she brought each syllable fiercely out. "She did not push me down, and trample me, as I said. I fell by accident," she ended in a shrill crescendo.

Into the hush that followed came a roar; it gathered a mighty force ere it struck upon Marcia's ear, and beyond her, to the judge's platform. "She shall — that woman there — once a daughter of mine — not now, nor shall she ever be again — be made to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. For her lie she has told, swearing to another's hurt, her tongue shall be bored. I call upon justice to be done, and for the law to take its course!"

Piercing the shriek from the wretched girl, as her father finished, and she slipped from Marcia's arms to the floor. The blacksmith folded his huge arms, which he had swung apart during his denunciatory speech, and gazed unmoved upon her.

"Justice is not so high a law as mercy," cried Marcia, her clear voice cutting straight through the intervening crowd, as she addressed him. "I, whom she injured, can find naught but pity in my heart for her."

"I call upon the law to be carried out," roared the blacksmith, doggedly, looking at the judges.

There was a tumult in the court room. Some cried out in very shame at him for an unnatural father; but others gave it that she should be

whipped, and then justice would be appeased. The excitement was spreading, and the deputies were becoming perplexed.

"Because she was my daughter" — the blacksmith mounted one of the seats, and his big figure seemed to swell like a vengeful giant, grim in his rage and defiance — "this is no reason why I should not be determined to have the law carried out. Ye all know me. Never have my lips been defiled by a lie; it is the blackest abomination in God's sight, and accursed shall ye all be who let it go unpunished. Let her tongue be bored, as God's mark upon her for the foul thing she has done."

He continued to swing his ponderous arms above his head. The people shuddered, and a woman wailed out from a distant corner, "Oh, unnatural father!"

Marcia turned and flashed an appealing look to Lucy, then pointed to Sylvy, lying prone upon the floor. The next instant, and she was up on the platform by the side of the deputies.

"Hold!" she cried, her voice ringing high above the angry roar, as the blacksmith began again, "take not the name of God in vain on thy blasphemous tongue. More foul of utterance it is thus to misquote Him, the God of Mercy and of Forgiveness, than is hers, poor soul, who lieth there." She pointed to Sylvy, now raised to

Lucy's arms, her head on Lucy's breast. "She has repented her sin, and confessed it. Thou, oh, hard heart," — she looked straight into the fierce, coal-black eyes across the sea of intervening faces, — "defieth the common law of humanity, and outrageth justice by an unholy anger. May God forgive thee!" She raised her hand toward heaven, then turned to the row of deputies stricken into silence. "Most worthy deputies, I am only a poor simple girl, unversed in any art by which I might address ye properly. Do thou pardon me, and give to me, the one whom she injured, the right to say what her punishment shall be. So may all be spoken of hereafter as Christian judges and godly men, who follow after the law of Christ our Father." She held them with her beautiful luminous eyes, and ceased; her arms fell to her sides, and she stood motionless, awaiting their reply.

It was Will Hepburn who started it, the cry, that in an instant every soul in the court room took up, save the blacksmith and his daughter. "She speaketh well; Marcia Sabine hath the right to decide what the punishment shall be." It rose and swelled fierce and high. And the deputies overcome by it, and glad to have the people decide what else would have been a puzzling thing, consulting together, announced presently that the crier had somewhat to say.

"Silence in the presence of the Court!" shouted the town crier.

"The Court hath decided that the innocent one, who endured the wrong and the injustice, shall adjudge the punishment for the offender. Thus shall justice be satisfied."

A shout arose from throats not accustomed, in the repression of the times, to demonstration. It reached the ears of the wretched offender, and upbore her poor heart to the door of hope. Marcia slipped down to her place beside her and put both arms around her, drawing the girl to herself. "She hath suffered her punishment already. Henceforth I shall comfort her as a sister," and pillowed her head on her breast.

"I disown her," foamed the blacksmith, still waving his brawny arms. "Never shall she enter my door again, nor call me father. My conscience alloweth me but this to declare."

"Then is our door open to your daughter." The Rev. John Davenport arose, and his wife beside him — he, tall and slender, his scholar's face beneath its frame of white hair sternly set in holy indignation, his eyes deep with pity for the suffering offender, yet scintillating in righteous anger as he turned them upon the blacksmith. "And at the parsonage, we will, by His grace, win her to a true knowledge of the love, the mercy, and the justice of our God."

Madam Eyers slips down "the alley" in her stiff silken gown, that rattled every step of the way, to stand, an arm around Marcia, and with proud, uplifted head.

Poganuc, the Indian servant, whose trained ear had lost never the hint of a syllable as he stood like a sentinel by the open window of the court room, again ran like a deer through the trackless forest till he came that night to the camp in the wilderness and touched Jed on the shoulder.

"How went it?" It was an anxious cry, hungry for an answer. "Was she able to forgive so great an injury?"

"She hath forgiven," answered Poganuc, slowly. "She loves the Great Spirit, for she called her 'sister.'"

XXIX

THEY spoke of their future, as they often did during these June days, and hand in hand looked up to the hills above.

Marcia had told him all, laying bare every thought of her heart, and Will had kissed her reverently for the pure, sweet child that she was.

"My foolish heart," said Marcia, "not to know that thou, Will, wert loved all the time. Every art to please thee must have studious thought in future, thou hast been so good to me, so patient."

"Nay, study not, dear heart, only be thyself, be Marcia, and when the leaves fall, thou wilt be my wife?"

"When the leaves fall, I will be thy wife," said Marcia.

"Might we not?" she asked presently. "Oh, Will, it would be sweet benison for all our lives to feel its breath." Her gaze wandered over the soft outline of Providence Hill, where nestled the cave.

"What, sweetheart? An' if thou crave it, it is already thine, if God give me power to accomplish it."

"Wouldst not desire the hands of those holy men of God laid on our heads" — Marcia lifted her beautiful eyes to the blue ones above — "so it might make us the better to have their benediction over our love."

"Truly thou say'st well, as ever thou dost, Marcia. God will bless us through them, His good servants, who have suffered so much for Him. Let us go now to the cave; is it not time to carry hither the basket of food?"

"Nearly," said Marcia. "Wait thou here and I will bring it." She went off on light foot, and presently came back, the basket on her arm. And entering the forest, they wended their way, cautious and alert for any surprise that might bring detective footsteps upon their path.

Suddenly Marcia started, and, like a fawn of the undergrowth, she pricked up her ears, "*Hist!*" her finger on her lips.

They halted, and waited quietly for further developments. None came, and hoping they were over-anxious, they proceeded on their way to the cave entrance, as the largest fissure could properly be called.

"They are at prayer," Marcia whispered, as they stepped within the narrow, winding passage. "Oh,

Will, how good was God to bring us here at this time."

Again that slight rustling, or was it the noise of the branches flapping against the rocky sides? Marcia held her hand at her heart. "We must go in and interrupt the sound of his voice. I fear I know not what." The nameless dread was making her numb and powerless.

He lifted her hand, it was cold and stiff.

"It is naught," he tried to say, but she drew him within.

General Goffe was kneeling by the side of the pallet. He rose as they entered, and welcomed them with his accustomed grace; the aged man feebly smiled a welcome.

"Thy voice, oh, sir, we did so long for thy prayer; but the sound of thy voice carries danger."

"Couldst hear it without? I did not know I spoke so loud. I lost myself to these surroundings."

"Yes," said Will, "we heard distinctly as we stood in the passage."

"Well, it is the last time." General Goffe looked about the rocky enclosure. "Truth it gives me a pain in the heart to leave it, for despite its cold and forbidding appearance this cave hath been to us a veritable haven of rest, and a Providence Hill indeed."

Marcia, forgetting at the moment the sounds in the forest that had filled her with nameless dread,

now spoke hastily in a whisper: "Oh, sir, methought I heard a stir in the forest that was not from foot of animal. Is there danger, think'st thou?"

"This morning when I wandered outside for air and strolled to yon big pine," — they knew the tree, it was one of their landmarks, — "I distinctly saw the form of an Indian between the trees. He did not move as I turned my eyes in his direction, but remained as motionless as the trees. I appeared not to notice him, and took a roundabout and long way back to the cave; but Indians once on the trail are never careless in following it up."

Marcia clasped her hands together tightly, and looked at Will in anguish.

"Was it not Poganuc?" he asked, to reassure her with this hope.

"Nay, I saw his face distinctly. I have never seen him before. He is probably one of the Indians hired as spies upon our movements. We must go hence and find a new refuge." All this in whispers, so the rocks gave no sign, although there was a soft, cat-like ear and an inscrutable face laid close to the outer surface. Suddenly they were withdrawn, and again the little rustling noise that Marcia had detected before, only now she was beyond its sound.

"We must go from here at once," she spoke quickly, with one of her rapid decisions. "Oh,

do not wait, God seems to say, 'tarry not, but go.'"

"This all blends with my thought," said General Goffe, "although I would choose to travel in the friendly darkness of the night. But we may be trapped if we wait."

"I am sure you will be," said Marcia. "Will, do speak and tell if this also is on thy mind."

"Thou sayest truly, Marcia," assented Will. "I am more anxious than I like to say."

"I am sure ye both are watched, and the cave discovered; for I heard a strange rustle in the wood some distance back, and again as we stood in the passage. If it is one man, he dares not attack thee, with us by thy side. If he goes for others to help him, now is thine only chance." Then a sudden inspiration flashed upon her.

"Do thou lose thyselves in the wood over above the farm-house; Will shall put at its edge two hoes. Take them, and work the ground with them as soon as ever thou reachest the clearing. Then if thou art observed from the hill, perchance they may set thee down as laborers tilling the soil. In this way canst thou reach the farm-house. I pray thee come now." She was at the entrance of the passage, straining her young eyes far and near. All was still as the grave.

"May Heaven above bless thee both, and make thy united life a happy one serving Him, each for

the other, and both for God," prayed General Goffe, solemnly.

Silently, with hushed hearts, scarcely daring to breathe, the little company wended their way, parting at the spot indicated by Marcia's quiet finger. Will and she returned to the farm, to carry out her plan. And the stuffy little loft over the corn chamber in the shed was again the refuge of the two Judges.

Three hours later a company of men, some six or eight in number, led by an Indian, burst rudely into the cave.

"Surrender! we have you now, trapped sure enough this time!" then horrible oaths, with blows and curses for the luckless red man.

Will, fleet of foot as an Indian runner, ran into town to the mansion of William Jones, carefully avoiding Pastor Davenport's house, and laid the case before him.

"The 'Sperry Farm' must be left behind," said the merchant, with a shrewd nod. "Now that its vicinity is suspected it is only a trifle less dangerous a locality than Pastor Davenport's. The next thing will be to get them out of New Haven Town," he mused.

"Lucy," he called. "Lucy Leet!" going to the door.

A voice from above stairs located her in the upper chamber, where the mistress of the man-

sion had lured her for a few days, as was her wont on the slightest pretext.

"Come here, child."

So Lucy ran over the stairs and into the big apartment, bringing a fine bloom with her. She greeted him kindly, all her soul in her eyes at thought of Marcia. But Mr. Jones was Mr. Jones, and she must attend to him first and with patient deference. So she looked at Will and listened to her host.

"Thy father hath an unused stone store, I think."

"Yes," said Lucy, with a "what in the world?" in the inner sanctum of her heart.

"I'm going to borrow it. Now listen, Lucy. Thou art little but a spoiled child; yet at bottom thou hast sound sense. I'll confide in thee, Lucy; thou must go home, say naught to any one, and to-morrow Will Hepburn here will appear in Guilford after dusk with two men. They will be the two Judges." He looked at her keenly from under his thick eyebrows, expecting a start, and perchance a little scream, but she moved not a hair.

"Anything else?" she asked, breaking a pause in which a bodkin let fall would have made a great racket.

"Thou hussy!" he cried discomfited, "and I telling thee this for a great secret!"

"Oh, I've known it this long time," said Miss Lucy, smoothing her lutestring gown complacently.

Mr. William Jones did not stay to ask when or where or how. He slipped at once into a business tone, and in short, crisp sentences gave her the orders.

"Do thou secrete them in the lower part of the stone store. I saw it once, thy father showed it me. But he must not know."

Lucy wrinkled her brows at that, the only thing of difficulty. She could get the stone store, or the whole estate, if she but laid claim to it, of her father, but to take it without — ah, here was the obstacle.

But she had "common sense at the bottom," as Mr. Jones had said. So she nodded her curly head — "Very well, sir," — as if a mere bagatelle were her part of the work. Then she ran upstairs to dream of the morrow, with her heart alight with joy. She was now to be joined to Marcia Sabine in the Cause, and all the engrossments of her after years were powerless to efface the memory of the thrill that now possessed her.

She ran back down the long staircase, meeting Will in the grand hall, as he was leaving for home. "Give my very good love to Mistress Marcia Sabine, if you please, sir," dropping him a sweeping courtesy, "and inform her that I too, Mis-

tress Lucy Leet, have been allotted a part in the work of saving the Judges."

And the after years for Marcia? Many happy visits, of herself and Will Hepburn, wedded when the leaves fell, were spent over in Guilford, with Lucy Leet, now daughter of a real Governor; for the election had taken place May 29, in which the Deputy Governor had become the highest executive of the Colony.

At all such times, the meetings in the lower part of the stone store, beneath the room where the spinning and weaving were accomplished, were lengthened to their utmost conversation with the holy men of God. And the husband and wife took back to their home on the "Sperry Farm" strength and Christian zeal and fortitude and hope.

Madam Eyers, long before the marriage day, had loudly proclaimed that the "Allerton Mansion" was to be the home of Marcia when she took upon herself her new name. What so appropriate as that the numerous and spacious apartments should yield comfort and delight to the young matron fitted to queen it royally in the heart of the Colony —New Haven Town? But Marcia shook her head in denial; her aunt, then in gentle decline, needed her; then, Goodwife Sperry slipping into the grave, the young wife would not leave her

uncle. No; the "Sperry Farm" was her home, and here she must serve God.

This, before the tale of the years is told.

"Thou hast a right to go, Marcia," 'twas William Jones who said it, in the Sperry kitchen, "thou and thy husband." He held up a bag that clinked as he shook it. "And there are other comforts besides this gold to carry."

Marcia's eyes widened, and the color came to her cheek, like a girl — the years touch lightly a soul set on God. The baby at her feet on the floor spatted his hands together, and then made a clutch at her gown.

"They can bless the child and lay holy hands of benediction on his head," she cried, gathering him up to clasp to her breast, whereat he ungratefully made a wild lunge at her pretty brown hair, crowing lustily as he gathered it up in his fists.

"He will be a man of parts, and carry well the name of John Davenport, I doubt me not," observed Mr. Jones, with a twinkle in his eye. "Zounds! but the youngster has the hold-on faculty. May the good Lord give him the other qualities of that blessed saint!"

"There, thou pretty one," murmured Marcia, her face pink in its struggle to free the hands of the crowing child; "mother bids thee to loosen thy hold. Dost hear me now, John?"

"Have a care, Marcia, else that small tyrant

will bring down thine independent spirit that kings could not make to quail," laughed Mr. Jones.

"He hears me, and obeys," cried Marcia, in triumph, holding both pink fists in her shapely hands. Little John turned and showed a tooth or two in a superior grin at the counsellor.

"Thou little scamp," cried Mr. Jones, shaking a generous forefinger at him, "see thou dost set great store by that mother of thine, or, by my soul, we'll rise up as one man against thee, and drive thee from New Haven Town."

"Ooh!" said little John, with another grin.

"Enough, now thou hast promised;" while Marcia, with tossed hair and pink cheeks, danced her boy proudly from arm to arm, devouring him with her eyes. On this pretty picture Will Hepburn stepped into the kitchen, light of foot, as if more than a dozen twelvemonths had not passed.

"It's well thou appearest," observed Mr. Jones; "this youngster of thine lords it over us completely. It is plain to see what he will be a few years hence."

Will opened his arms; but his eyes were on Marcia's blooming face. "Give me the boy, wife," he said.

Little John, at the sight of his father, kicked ungratefully at the arms that held him. Marcia released him with a last loving pat. Then she turned, the love-light still in her eyes. "Tell Will

what we are to do," and she laid her hand on her husband's arm. He suddenly drew her within, and against the crowing, kicking youngster, and held her fast.

"It appeareth to us best," began William Jones, "that some representative should go from New Haven Town to visit our honored friends in Hadley." He lowered his voice involuntarily. "Quite as much to bear expressions of continued friendship and encouragement to their old age," he continued, "as to carry material succor. I cannot leave home to go again, the affairs of the Colony forbid it, and James Davids ought not to risk himself or them; moreover, no one is so fitted as thou and Marcia to set forth on the errand. Wouldst thou like it, friend Hepburn?" His kind eyes glowed with the happiness he was imparting.

Will turned a shining face above the laughing one of the boy in his arms. "Wouldst like it, wife?"

"Oh, Will!" It was all she said, but Mr. Jones knew that nothing remained to settle, save the time when the expedition should be made.

"Poganuc shall go with us," said Will at last, when all preliminaries were settled, and the visitor, transferring the bag of gold and some other comforts, which he took from his saddle-bags, to their care, prepared to depart. "Poganuc knows every

rod of the way, and will guide us by the quickest trail."

"See that thou remain as long as possible to comfort their hearts. God knows when thou or we shall see them again, at least, General Whalley. In the last letter writ by General Goffe he gives little promise of the old man's life continuing long."

"God grant that we see him once again," breathed Marcia.

But Poganuc was not their guide. When it came to the last day, and all things were nearly ready at the "Sperry Farm" for the travellers to set forth, a tall, loose-jointed figure strode up to the door, hot and tired, with what had been a long journey. It was Jedediah Beetle.

"I ain't goin' to spile many words," he announced, striding into the farm-house kitchen and surveying them all. Marcia turned in her preparations, some last fond ones for Farmer Sperry, who was to be left behind with Hannah Allerton, now a little maid of a dozen summers, and the perfect pattern of her mother, Marcia Sabine, when the same age. The widow Allerton, whose namesake she was, began early to assume all possible proprietorship over the child, declaring since Marcia wouldn't come to her senses and live at the Mansion, Hannah Allerton should. But here the young matron smiled, and the little maid,

as was quite proper, found herself growing up with father and mother and Uncle Sperry, who doted on her, in the quiet farm-house nestled under the protecting forest cliffs of Providence Hill. Into all housewifely ways she bloomed happily, with only occasional visits to the grand "Allerton Mansion," to come home laden with gifts and followed by the pleading tears of the poor little widow.

"Now see, daughter, the reward of thy faithful endeavor to please thy father and me," said Marcia to the little maid when the plan of the journey became fixed. "Thou canst keep the house all by thyself for Uncle Sperry." She dropped a kiss on the small blooming cheek, and gazed fondly into the brown eyes.

Hannah gave a gasp of delighted emotion too strong for words. "Oh, mother!" she exclaimed, when she found her tongue, "dost mean it? All alone by myself?" She stood still quite overcome with astonishment, in the middle of the kitchen floor.

"All alone by thyself," declared Marcia, with equal delight.

Hannah flung her small arms, in their long, blue-checked apron sleeves, quickly around her mother's neck. "Oh, I'll be so good," she cried, cuddling up against the soft neck. "I'll knit my stent every single day" (her special trial), "and I won't

run out doors till every bit of work is done," she rushed on; "and —'

"Thou wilt be good, daughter," interrupted Marcia, "that is enough to say. And mother knows it, and trusts thee."

And the little maid walked taller all the rest of the day, and swelled with pretty importance over each preparation for her triumph.

"Oh, Jed," now cried Mrs. Hepburn, well pleased, and dropping her work, she hastened to him; "you have heard that we are going, and you have come to bid us good-by."

"No, I ain't," said Jed, "I ain't much on good-bys when it comes to sayin' 'em to you an' your famb'ly. I'm goin' with ye."

"Not to Hadley!" exclaimed Marcia, unguardedly.

Jed looked uneasily around, but finding Hannah in the buttery, regained his composure.

"It is the first time I have forgotten myself," said Marcia, the color rising to her cheek. "Be not afraid, the child knows naught of our destination."

"Pray she don't hear it then," muttered Jed. "Yes, that's where I be a-pintin' at," he declared, shaking his tousled head; "I can follow the way better 'n Poganuc, though the Lord knows an Injun 'll smell a trail like a dog doos a bone. When d' ye start?"

"To-morrow, at sun-up," said Marcia, her eyes

kindling. "Oh, Jed, how beautiful that you can go, and Poganuc can stay back with Uncle Sperry. I was worrying about that; for the others on the farm aren't like Poganuc, and that you know."

"That's so," said Jed, well pleased at the easy adjustment of his plan. "Well, all that's left for us, then, is to git up and git, 's fur as I can see."

This they did in the early dawn of the next day. Marcia, her baby at her breast, on the pillion behind her husband, and Jed trudging on by their side. Farmer Sperry, hand-in-hand with the little maid, watched them out of sight.

"Where are they going, Uncle Sperry?" asked Hannah, now that the bustle of departure had died down, overcome with feminine curiosity.

"They are on blessed work — blessed work," said Farmer Sperry, with his gaze fixed on the forest-crowned height along whose precipitous side nestled the cave.

"But where are they going, uncle?" persisted Hannah, tugging at his hand to bring the gaze down to her level.

"Ask me no questions, child," said Farmer Sperry, dropping his eyes to look into her puzzled brown ones. "Enough that they are on the Lord's errand, and He goes with them."

Every step of the faithful horse, although it bore

them further from the loved ones in the dear farm-house, and the little grave nestling in the shadow of the hill, where their second-born child had been laid, struck the undertone of their souls with glad rejoicings. They were on the Lord's errand, as Farmer Sperry had said. And all the weary journey through the wild forest, over hill and dale, their way always perilous and many times lost in the trackless maze where even the lynx-eyed watchfulness of Jed could scarce discern it, Marcia crooned to her baby, and kept her husband's heart to its highest cheer by her bright words and smiles. She was more like a girl than ever, and Will found his grave demeanor, quite befitting the responsible positions he was climbing up to in the Colony, overborne by her sunny spirit.

"Methinks there is small need of any fear of the Indians ever uprising to trouble these parts," observed Marcia, allowing her heart to settle into the peace of the slow wilderness journey, and resting her gaze on the luxuriant fern growth of a little dell they were passing through. "What a pity to crush the pretty things," leaning off from her pillion to search the cool green depths.

Jed sniffed the fragrant air like a battle horse. "Injuns is Injuns," he said sententiously; and loping on, "an' King Philip's War hain't made them none too pleasant," he added.

"But the Nipmug and Quanbaug tribes around

here are peaceable enough," said Marcia, "and they know that the white men are their best friends."

"May be," said Jed, "'tain't in reason to suppose they'd ever rise here and spite their noses to spile their faces. But Injuns is Injuns," was all he would say, despite Marcia's cheery efforts. With Will it was different. Notwithstanding his less sanguine temperament, he fully agreed with her, and gave himself up as he had not for many a day to the enjoyment of the journey. When his laugh rang out to waken the echoes of the silent forest, Jed would cast uneasy glances around, and then say, "Best be careful not to make so much noise." Whereat Marcia, delighted to see her husband so merry, would cry in her light-hearted way, "Nay; do not chide us, Jed," and under cover of the broad shoulder, like a shield before her, would whisper, "it is as if we were children again, Will, you and I growing up on the farm together."

"And I was loving you all the time, sweetheart," he would glance back to whisper in reply.

"And in truth my heart was yours then, only I didn't know it," Marcia made reply.

And Jed, who seemed to have a sudden fall of his spirits, born of the forest gloom, would glance furtively here and there, muttering between shut teeth, "I'm blest ef I know what's come over me

sence I started. Somethin' seems to say, 'Keep your eyes peeled, Jed.'"

And so they came into peaceful Hadley, riding into its welcome shelter on the edge of that waning day of summer, 1675.

XXX

THE sunken eyes of the old man glowed for a moment with a forgotten fervor, then they settled back in their sockets, and it was as if he had never seen Marcia and her husband standing over him.

"But he did know us," cried Marcia, through soft tears that rained down on the shrivelled hands lying on the coverlet.

"Yes," said General Goffe, "I doubt not he knew thee. Thank God for it. That has not happened to me for many a long day."

"And he is at peace" said Will, his hand on his wife's. "He can suffer no more. Let us dwell on that, Marcia sweet."

"He can suffer no more." General Goffe seemed to forget their presence, and raised his long arms to the ceiling of the refuge beneath the Russel homestead. "O God, he is beyond the cruelty of the pursuer, and I endanger him not by this prayer. Give to me some work to do for the cause of freedom, or I break these walls and die!"

It was like the scream of the war-horse, bidding exulting defiance to the foe, and wild yearning for

the thick of the fray. Then his voice broke in a heavy sob, and he buried his face in his hands.

Marcia felt all her soul thrill in one mighty impulse to lift from the abyss of gloom his hitherto undaunted spirit. "Thou wilt yet achieve somewhat for freedom's sake," she cried triumphantly, the color rushing to her cheek. "Doubt not; it is coming for thy hand to accomplish." Her voice, low and intense, rang like that of prophet of old, and she held him with her eyes.

"So long — so many weary years — and my good right arm longing for the battles of the Lord." He lifted not his face. They dropped away at last, to talk softly in a corner.

"Bring the child, Will," she said. "Let him lay his hands on the little one's head, and consecrate him to freedom. It is meet now."

Little John was brought, wrenched from Mother Russel's arms, where he had fallen asleep, the good dame entranced over his charms, and perfectly oblivious to her other guests. The parson regarded her in disapproval.

"One would think our friends from New Haven Town merited better things of thee, Sarah," he said reproachfully.

"Look at his pink toes!" cried Mistress Russel, uncovering the warm blanket as if such infantile members had hitherto been unknown to her. "And the dimple, just like his mother's. And see

him smile! Oh, my precious lamb!" as little John, in an incipient roar, gave signs of unmistakable displeasure at the liberties taken with his small person. It was at this stage of affairs that Will Hepburn marched into the keeping room and bore off his son.

They laid him in the arms, once so mighty. Marcia noted with a pang their powerful muscles and sinewy length, now hopeless in inaction. "Bless the child, oh, our father and friend; he has the name thou lovest so well." She could scarcely speak it for her tears, yet he caught it quickly. "Perchance he may, by this consecration of thine, carry on thy work." She fell on her knees before him, and hid her face in the blanket falling away from the rosy little feet.

The face of General Goffe lightened as he lifted it slowly. As though a ray of sunshine pierced the gloom, its noble lineaments were bathed in a serenity those watching had never seen upon his countenance. "Now may God forever bless thee, John Davenport Hepburn, and raise thee up to battle for holy Liberty." He ceased; but Will and Marcia moved not.

"Ah goo!" cried little John, making a clutch at the thick beard, now so white, and flowing so alluringly above him.

"And I feel in my breast a stirring of hope at thy words, daughter," said General Goffe, bending

his piercing black eyes in which a new light now shone, upon her downcast head; "verily, I believe that the Lord will yet give me somewhat to do for Him before I go hence. O Liberty, thou art surely destined to reign over this fair land! God save it for thee!"

The first beams of the morning twilight of that fair day to usher in September of the year 1675 broke over sweet Hadley's plain, before the blessed conference beneath the Russel homestead broke up, and Will and Marcia threw themselves down for an hour or two of much-needed rest. The sun was shining brightly when Marcia suddenly awoke.

"Will!" she exclaimed in dismay. But Will had been gone without some little time, and only little John, in his rosy sleep at her side, stirred lightly at her words.

Marcia hurried with rapid fingers at her toilet, and soon presented a rosy face of shame to good Dame Russel pottering in the kitchen over the morning work.

"How is the blessed child?" she cried, with no thought for Marcia.

"He is well. Oh, can you forgive—"

"Canst bring him out?" cried the dame, hungrily.

"No; best not till he wakes," said Marcia. "I am so sorry to be late, dear Mrs. Russel, and quite ashamed, thou must know."

The good mistress of the parsonage turned a disappointed face. She had not heard a word save the first sentence.

"I will keep him, and thou must go to the meeting-house," she observed abruptly, breaking into Marcia's further attempts at apology.

"I do not understand," said the younger matron, perplexedly.

"Did not Mr. Russel tell thee? There is to be a meeting of fasting and prayer this day on account of King Philip's War. Thou shalt go, and I will stay and mind the babe." Goodwife Russel brought this out so eagerly, her little pale eyes shining in anticipation, that Marcia had not the heart to deny the lonely mother in the old parsonage from which the children had long since gone forth. So she said kindly, —

"Thou mayest have thy wish," which completely overwhelmed the good dame with delight.

"Let us enter with all our hearts into the prayers for those poor souls who are in the midst of this terrible war," said Marcia to her husband, as they wended their way to the meeting-house whither good Parson Russel had preceded them. "How happy are the dwellers in this quiet spot, so peaceful and secure! Oh, Will, God was good, indeed, to the dear Judges to give them refuge here."

Will lifted his eyes to the gentle slopes, and off

over the happy valley smiling in that September sunlight, and acquiesced in every word of his wife. So they talked on their way over the meadows, crowned with golden-rod and asters.

Try as Marcia would, it was impossible to keep her thoughts from wandering through the Fast Day exercises. Down to the house, nestling under the protecting cliffs of Providence Hill, they flew; she was now with Farmer Sperry and the little maid, and smiling in her serene confidence of soon being with them again. Then her love-lit glance was over baby John, with the soft attentions of Dame Russel enfolding him. "How glad I am that he can comfort her lonely old heart." Then the dear Judges, and the holy inspiration her husband and she had gained in the vigils of the night just passed, when General Goffe had unburdened his heart with memories of the old days, setting for them picture after picture of the struggle for Liberty — of the Protectorate, and of the final days when the life of England's defenders waned in exile.

She caught her breath, and her cheek glowed as she involuntarily glanced across the meeting-house to her husband sitting on the men's side. He was not looking at her, but had his head raised, his eyes fixed in a strange expression backward at the door. Marcia quickly followed his glance. At the same instant a yell, sudden and ear-splitting, smote her

ear. Even then she knew not what it was, but stared with the wide unconscious eyes of a child.

At once everything was in confusion. Parson Russel shut the big Bible with a clap, and drew his thin old figure up. The men sprang to the heavy oaken door, smiting it fast; and those who had brought weapons to the meeting-house, as was the custom, rushed into positions of guard, huddling the women and children into the centre of the room.

Marcia rushed over to Will.

"Oh, what is it?" she cried, still strangely unconscious, and seizing his arm. "Oh, Will, what can it be?"

He looked at her a breathing space without speaking, then through white lips, "An Indian raid," he answered, as he held her fast.

She struggled with panting breath to get free. "An Indian raid. Oh, Will, *our* child!" she screamed, and madly tearing herself from him she rushed to the man at the door.

"Let me out!" she cried hoarsely, "my child is without," and sought to pull and to push her way through.

They looked at her with pitying eyes. "No one can go from here," said one. "And all outside must be left to their fate," said another, less kind, as they barred the way.

A piercing scream left Marcia's lips as they pushed

her back. "Oh, little John!" She flung her hands above her brown hair, and clenched them in agony. The yells of the savages drowned her voice, and presently the rush of feet — they could see them through the window coming madly down the forest-covered slopes where they had been concealed, and over the meadows, brandishing their tomahawks and bows and arrows, a hideous throng. The blue sky above seemed to drop blood, and even God to have turned away.

Will only waited to seize her in his arms, before he rushed to the guarding party at the door. "Be brave, sweetheart," he whispered close to her bonny brown hair.

"But our child, Will," she grovelled to the ground beneath his arms.

"Is in God's hands, Marcia. Will you help or hinder the work we have before us?" He glanced significantly as she raised her poor white face, at the group of frightened women whom her screams seemed to paralyze; then into her eyes his gaze burnt its way.

All Marcia's soul rose to meet it. "Before God, Will, I'll help." She sprang to her feet, raised her hands toward heaven. "God will save us," she cried shrilly, then plunged toward the men at the door.

"Give me a musket. I can use it."

"Alas, mistress," said the man who had turned

her off with abrupt speech, one Makepeace Brown, "I believe thee," as he looked into her eyes; "but we have not enough for the men. Thou may'st have a chance later," he added grimly, with a glance over the shoulders of the men who were guarding the narrow, little-paned windows.

Marcia, with white face and burning eyes, allowed no pause in her thought, but walked up and down among the women, encouraging them with speech, to pave the way for work that might be theirs when their defenders fell. And when the onslaught came, and the first brave man fell, shot in the heart by an arrow that sped through the window, it was she who seized the musket from his dying hand and sent along its muzzle a death-dealing ball.

"Good for thee, whoever thou art!" exclaimed the man next her, through set teeth. "O God!" It was an indescribable sound that followed from his lips, and Marcia's blood froze in her veins to see, as he pointed across the meadow, a tall figure flying for life, with hundreds, it seemed, of painted, yelling savages at his heels.

"Jed!" she screamed in an agony. "Oh, open the door to him!" she flung herself again upon the group guarding it. "Quick, or he is lost!"

"He is lost already," she heard them say. In her frenzied ears it rang. But she still screamed on,—"You do not know him; oh, Will, tell them,

tell them." She wrung her hands in despair. "He will outrun them all. He will save us. For God's sake be ready to open the door!"

The noise and confusion attendant upon this new phase of the situation had attracted the attention of the savages on the further side of the meeting-house, who, on seeing the plight of the pursued man, gave vent to howls of derision and glee, blood-curdling to the senses of the little beleaguered party.

Jed, for it was indeed he, knowing it to be useless in the temper of this raid, engendered by the bitter war, especially under his present association with the hated pale-faces, to attempt a parley on the strength of his Indian tribal relations, concluded to trust first to his fleetness of foot and ready wit, and bear within the meeting-house to Marcia a certain message. If he failed, why, then, the foe should know that he was to all intents and purposes "an Injun of the Injuns, an', blast 'em! that there's a God in Israel. So here goes!"

Marcia's hand was upraised to heaven, and faltered not, as the yells of delight shrieked through the air, and the terrible race sped on. "Be ready to open the door!" she commanded in a clear voice.

They obeyed, some turning away their eyes to avoid seeing the end when the poor wretch was come up with; but involuntarily the men guarding

the iron bar yielded themselves to her will, though it was her husband's hand that was first upon the only protection they possessed — when suddenly, without warning, Jed rushed around the other side of the meeting-house, jabbed in the stomach a young brave carelessly intent on the race, bowling him over like a log; performed a similar attention toward another; leaped over their bodies, throwing his long arms heavenward, then waving them out like a windmill, dealing blows of destruction on every side. All this, with extraordinary noises unlike anything ever heard before, either by savage or tutored ears, and there was Jed, by this one breathing space of time, gained by his wit, on the outside of the door — yellow tousled hair streaming behind him, grunting, yelling, and gesticulating like a demon; and the next instant he was within — safe! safe! a dusky hand too late clutching his retreating figure, only to be severed at the wrist by Makepeace Brown's trusty sword.

"I guess I've spilt their fun," drawled Jed, with a grin, as the little party closed around him. Marcia, seizing his brawny hand, "Jed!" she said only one word.

"He's safe — the little un," said Jed, pointing a grimy thumb toward the parsonage. "Come over here," he drew her to a corner. "Don't be scared and let out a word, no matter who comes to take a hand at these devils;" then he sprung

into the breach left by that same Makepeace Brown, who had received a tomahawk thrust crashing through the window, whither he had gone in response to a call from those on guard there.

Marcia's heart was saying over and over that God would not let the Judges be discovered, as, in the event of victory for the savages, must be the result, when a smell of fire, sickening to the senses and death to hope, swept in upon the doomed party. The savages, who had been consumed with speechless rage at the escape of their victim, had now apparently concluded to end the raid in a wholesale destruction of the village by the torch. The faces of the beleaguered men blanched, they clenched their useless muskets with nerveless fingers. Some one started an old Covenanting hymn, and many fell on their knees in prayer, as the wood and straw were dragged up and piled around the meeting-house, and the fire crackled in the September breeze, finding echo here and there in other flames set over neighboring house-tops.

Jed gnashed his teeth, "Why don't he come?" He did not dare to give utterance to the words. "Ah, *now*, you devils!"

What is this sight that the hopeless eyes of the doomed ones now see? A mighty warrior, tall, brawny, and self-assured of figure and bearing, with white flowing beard, and piercing eyes that

burn into the soul of the beholder from their frame of silvery hair, his good right arm brandishing a sword, his lusty voice calling to martial array, as if to an army at his back! No one ever saw his like in Hadley.

He is advancing now across the meadow, a terrible avenger, from whom the savages, after one glance, precipitately flee. Those who are busy over their fiendish work at the meeting-house first are made aware of the change in the situation by the swarms encircling them in a mad retreat, and, dropping their implements of destruction, yes, even their weapons of warfare, they join the mad rout to the woods, the warrior advancing with mighty strides.

"Now — now — at 'em! Gosh an' Jerusalem, at 'em an' give 'em fits!" roared Jed, swinging back the iron bar, and throwing wide the door he plunged out, emitting yells enough for a whole reënforcing army. Gideon's three hundred men, with their pitchers and trumpets, were nothing to him, for the noise he made! And the next man out of the meeting-house was Will Hepburn.

The savages, seeing and hearing all this, redoubled their efforts to escape, giving Jed lively work enough to suit even him, as he successfully intercepted many whom he made sure would never give him or the settlers further trouble.

Marcia took one look at the terrible stranger. "O God, thou hast sent thy messenger to save us!" she cried, guarding lip and eye.

"Who is it?" cried the women, fearfully.

"The messenger of God. Oh, men, do you not see He has sent His Angel to deliver us? Go to him and obey his commands." She pushed forward in her eagerness the more dilatory ones; the others were already without, and being marshalled, in stentorian tones, in battle array, Jed and Will Hepburn in the forefront, and close to the terrible stranger who, by superhuman power, urged his army on.

Over the slopes they went, — an army constantly increasing, as the villagers, alarmed in their homes, only tarried to put out the fires that threatened, and now came running up with muskets and all weapons that could be gathered.

The screams and yells of the flying savages died off in the thunder of the stranger's stentorian orders and the shouts of his army. In the superstitious eyes of the Indians he had dropped from the sky, sent by the Great Spirit to punish them; and their dusky bosoms, that knew no fear of earthly foes, melted like wax, and they ran ignobly, falling over each other in their panic, and destroying, in their mad rush, friend instead of foe.

Raise a weapon against the pale-face? No —

no! the Great Spirit was offended, and had sent swift judgment upon their tribes.

And lo! the Nipmug, Quanbaug, and their allies were gone, and only the dead bodies of their fallen braves left to mark the scene.

And when the people of Hadley turned to thank their deliverer — he was not! Out of the clouds he seemed to have come, and into the clouds to return. And the people of Hadley, hushed and awe-struck, repaired to their dwellings, and by the firesides of their rescued homes, in peace and security, told the tale oft and oft, with bated breath and streaming tears of gratitude, how God had really sent a messenger to deliver them. They had seen him with their own eyes. Praise God!

And Marcia "folded all these things in her heart," for she could not speak them yet out of hushed lips, she and Will, for many long years. Only to the few trusted souls who had so long held the fate of the Judges in their hands could she tell how General Goffe had indeed struck a mighty blow for the safety of God's chosen people, for whom He destined this fair land of Liberty!

And so the years stretch away, and in New Haven Town, that shelter to the sons of Liberty, Marcia and Will minister with glad hands to James Davids, who is written on a certain official paper in dangerous proximity to that of General Whalley and General Goffe as John Dixwell.

The Judges' Cave

And then, how they slip away — those years. A woman is kneeling before two graves, a young maiden looking down at her with hushed breath while the little lad plays at her feet. Her husband whispers, "Dear heart, it is well." And they all bring flowers. She does not weep; instead, there is a light in her beautiful dark eyes, as she thinks of the tired feet at rest, and the weary eyes into which the hunted look shall come no more, and the mansions in the Father's house, instead of the chill and lonely cave upon the mountain top.

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